

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



Teaching Technique 46

Quotation Summaries

ACTIVITY TYPE

- Reading
- Writing

TEACHING PROBLEM ADDRESSED

- Cheating
- Surface Learning

LEARNING TAXONOMIC LEVEL

- Application: Analysis and Critical Thinking
- Foundational Knowledge

Quotation Summaries

In *Quotation Summaries (QS)*, students comment on a series of quotes from their assigned reading using a structured process.

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- 1** Clarify your teaching purpose and learning goals for the *QS*
 - 2** Select the reading assignment and identify significant quotes
 - 3** Set assignment parameters
 - 4** Develop a plan for learning assessment or grading
 - 5** Create a handout and communicate assignment parameters to students
 - 6** Implement the technique
 - 7** Reflect upon the activity and evaluate its effectiveness

Step-By-Step Instructions

In this section, we provide you with guidance on each of the seven steps involved as you consider this technique.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Quotation Summaries (also referred to as *Quotation Commentaries*) helps students learn how to use quoted material by interpreting, paraphrasing, synthesizing, and citing excerpts from assigned readings. It's a useful way to prepare students for more significant writing projects, as it teaches students how to use quoted material appropriately. *Quotation Summaries* also underscores the instructor's commitment to the value of the assigned reading, addressing a frequent student complaint that in-class conversations do not draw explicitly enough on the text that students have been asked to spend time reading.

Students' written analyses are useful both for determining whether or not students have done the preparatory assigned reading and to gain insights into how well they have processed and understood the reading. These summaries—which are the learning artifacts—also allow for investigating whether students know how to use quoted information appropriately. *Quotation Summaries* are most effective as a formative assessment of student understanding and then using the results to target instruction. It may also be used to evaluate student performance, although this is most appropriate in courses where interpretation and citation of readings are an important learning outcome.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

Students receive a handout with a set of quotations from a recent reading assignment and then comment on them, following a specific process:

- Paraphrase
- Interpret
- Comment
- Cite

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

Select the reading assignment for the activity. Any reading appropriate for the class can work, but scholarly articles work particularly well.

Step-By-Step Instructions (CON'T)

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

Develop a system for scoring responses. It can be a simple 4-point scale rating the responses from “highly accurate” to “highly inaccurate” to something more complex, such as a rubric for evaluating each response according to specific criteria, for example:

EVALUATION RUBRIC FOR QUOTATION SUMMARIES				
	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	WEAK
PARAPHRASE				
SYNTHESIS				
CITED EXCERPTS				
INTERPRETATION				

Quotation Summaries are typically a low-stakes grade or used to determine participation points, although some instructors might weight it more depending upon course learning goals. There are several different ways to analyze the data collected from individuals at an aggregate level, such as:

- Average the individual scores to develop an aggregate (e.g. students averaged 80% correct scores).
- Examine each quotation for quality of responses, then note which quotation students scored the highest on, and note those that they scored the lowest on. Consider whether you need to provide additional instruction in areas of least understanding.
- Consider listing keywords you would expect students to use in describing the quotations and then examine the keywords they did use; compare your responses to theirs.

Quotation Summaries, particularly if you use it over several administrations, can yield information that you can provide to stakeholders through simple tables or charts. For your item/quote analysis on individual artifacts, consider a bar graph or a table to illustrate percentages correct or incorrect.

To interpret your findings, consider the following:

- Do students generally seem to understand the readings?
- Are they able to interpret the quotations when they appear out of context?
- Are they able to use their own words to express or rephrase the ideas?
- Are they able to cite it using the correct format?

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

To communicate assignment parameters to students efficiently, develop an assignment handout. Create a handout that contains several brief passages from the text, followed by prompts such as the following along with space for responding to them.

- **Paraphrase:** Rephrase the meaning of this passage in 3–5 sentences using your own words.
- **Interpret:** Explain the meaning of this passage. Why is it significant?
- **Comment:** Express your opinion of this passage. Do you agree/disagree? Find it valuable/not valuable?
- **Cite:** Write out how you would cite the above using MLA format.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

- Assign the reading and ask students to complete it.
- Announce the activity and distribute the handout with the quotations, and answer any student questions.
- Ask students to complete the handout.
- Consider asking students to share their comments with the class, offering new insights or building upon or contradicting comments that have already been made.
- Collect and assess the handouts.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

When reflecting on the activity and how effective it was, consider the following questions:

- Did the technique match the course learning goals and objectives?
- Did it meet my goals for this learning module?
- Was it appropriate for the students?
- Did students understand their roles and responsibilities?
- Did the technique keep the students engaged?
- Did it promote student learning?
- Did it provide me with information about student understanding?

If you answer yes to all or most of these questions, next consider how you might improve the activity for the next use.

Support Materials

The materials in this section are intended to help you with the process of implementing this technique. For *Quotation Summaries*, we are providing you with ideas to vary it.

VARIATIONS

- This technique may be adapted to have students select the quotations themselves, which provides additional information about how well they can assess what is important and what is not. Quotations that they select may be those that they especially liked or disliked, ones that they found best illustrate the major thesis, ones that they found most difficult to understand, and so forth. Students say where their quoted passage is in the text (e.g., “page 3 paragraph 5”), and then read their quote as all class members follow along on the specific page and passage with them (Brookfield and Preskill, 2005, pp. 72–73).
- If you use collaborative learning, have students work in groups to complete their commentaries.

Online Adaptation

This section is intended to help you with the process of implementing and assessing *Quotation Summaries* in your online class.

HOW TO GET STARTED

- Choose several brief passages from an assigned reading, and create a quiz or assignment in your Learning Management System.
- For each of the selected quotes, create a series of essay questions that ask students to:
 - › **Paraphrase** the meaning of this passage in 3-5 sentences using your own words.
 - › **Interpret** the meaning of this passage; why is it significant?
 - › **Comment** upon this passage with your opinion; do you agree/disagree, find it valuable/not valuable?
 - › **Write out** how you would cite the quote using MLA format.
- Decide how you will score the *Quotation Summaries* and have students submit through your LMS.

Technique Template

Following are two templates to assist you as you think through how you might implement this technique in your own class. The first is a completed template, providing an example of how a Professor adapted *Quotation Summaries* in their course, *Introduction to Shakespeare*. The second is a blank template for you to fill out to tailor this technique for your course.

Technique Template

Sample Quotation Summary Completed Technique Template:

Content from *Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*

Introduction to Shakespeare

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

This is a lower division English course taught online.

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

This professor uses a variation of Quotation Commentaries as a means to stimulate whole class discussion and detailed analysis of the dramatic works of Shakespeare. Rather than focusing on correct citations, her goal is that students will be able to identify the play from a quotation, to provide context and meaning, and to be able to explain the significance of the quotation to the play.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?

She selects a variety of quotations from the assigned plays and then uses the quotations as the basis for students' contribution to the online discussion.

STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?

In the online discussion, she presents the quote. The first student to talk about a specific quote must provide, at a minimum, basic information about the quote (identify who said it and describe the dramatic context). Other students build upon these comments adding insights regarding the quote's deeper meaning and relationship to the play's themes.

STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?

She uses a simple +/check/- grading system to evaluate each individual student's posting and also sometimes gives feedback to individual students.

STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?

She communicates assignment instructions as well as the prompt that is serving as the quote in the introduction to each discussion thread.

STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?

She implements the technique in a straightforward manner as the framework for online discussion and feels that there are no additional logistical aspects to consider.

STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.

Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been

She observes that the LAT helps to ensure students have done the reading and to class prepared, that it gets discussion started quickly, and that the structure propels the discussion naturally as students must offer new and deeper insights as they build upon each other's contributions.

improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?

Technique Template

This template is intended for use when planning to implement **Quotation Summaries** in your class. Fill in the blanks below, and use the information provided elsewhere in the Instructor's Guide to assist you in your thinking.

Course Name

COURSE CHARACTERISTICS

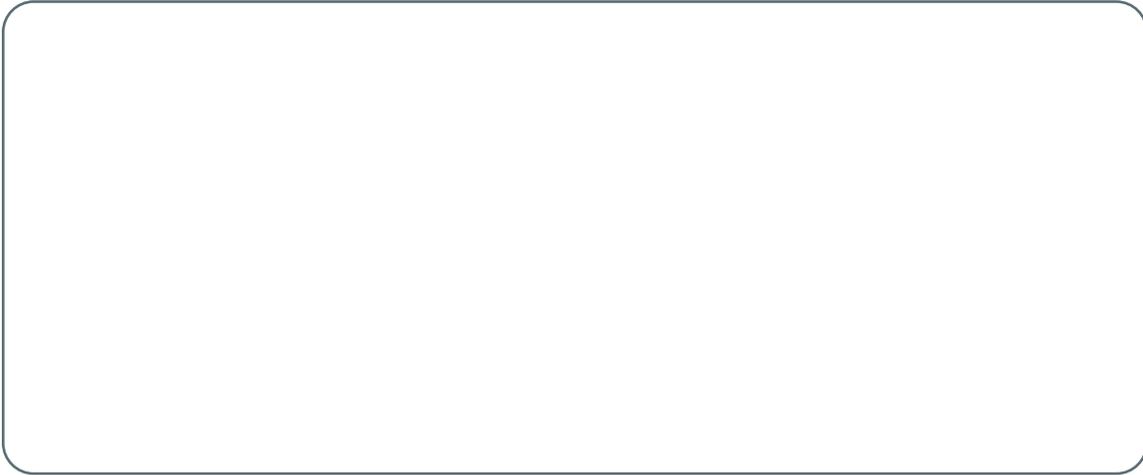
What are the situational factors that impact this course? For example, is it on campus or online? How many students? Is it lower division or graduate? Are there student attributes such as attitudes, prior knowledge, reasons for enrolling, and so forth that should be taken into account as you consider this technique?

STEP 1: CLARIFY YOUR TEACHING PURPOSE AND LEARNING GOALS

Why are you choosing this technique? What do you hope to accomplish?

STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE LEARNING TASK'S UNDERLYING PROBLEM AND PROMPT

What is the question you want learners to address, or problem you want them to solve?



STEP 3: SET ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS

What are the assignment logistics? For example, will this be assigned individually or is it group work? How long will the assignment take? Will students be submitting a product? What materials, resources, or additional information do you anticipate needing?



STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT OR GRADING

If you decide to assess learning, how will you determine that learning has occurred? For example, will you use a simple +/check/- grading system? If you use a rubric, will you use an existing one or create one? What will be your criteria and standards?



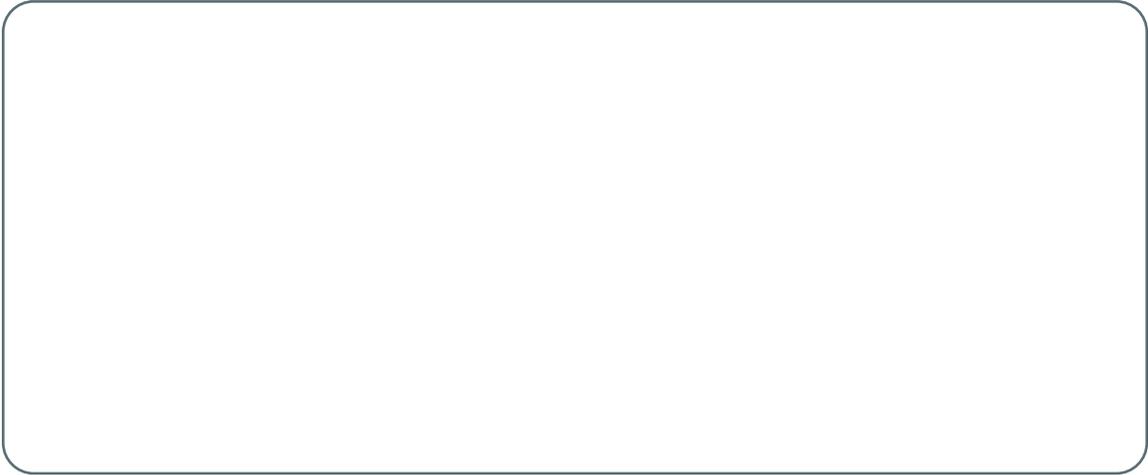
STEP 5: COMMUNICATE ASSIGNMENT PARAMETERS TO STUDENTS

How will you communicate assignment parameters to students? For example, through a handout? A prompt on a presentation slide? Assignment instructions in your online course?



STEP 6: IMPLEMENT THE TECHNIQUE

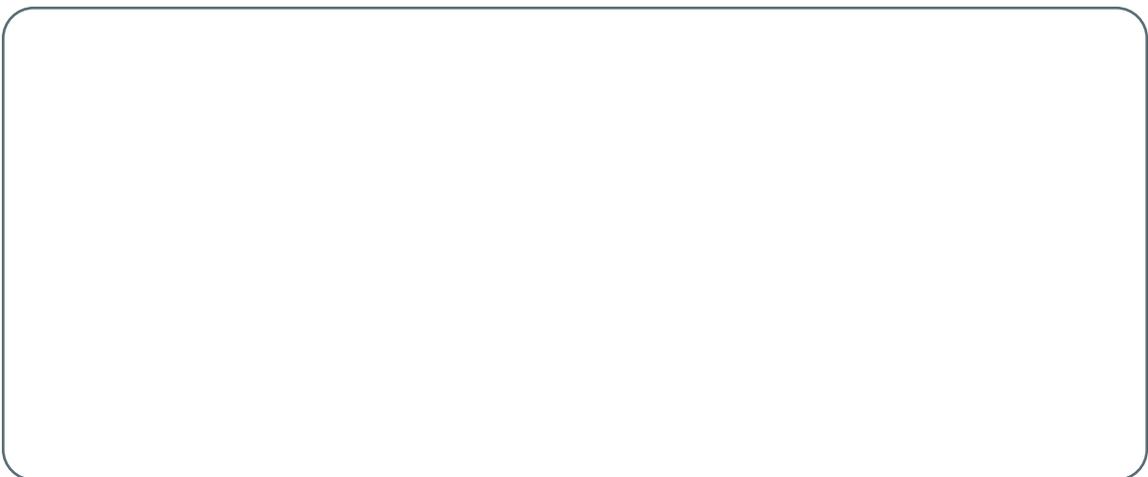
How will you adapt steps/procedures for your students? Are there any additional logistical aspects to consider?



STEP 7: REFLECT UPON THE ACTIVITY AND EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Note: This step will be completed after you have implemented the technique.

Did this technique help you accomplish your goals? What worked well? What could have been improved? What might you change if you decide to implement the activity again?



References and Resources

PRIMARY SOURCE

Content for this download was drawn primarily from “Learning Assessment Technique 13: Quotation Commentaries” in *Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty* (Barkley & Major, 2016), pp. 158–163. It includes material that was adapted or reproduced with permission. For further information about this technique, including examples in both on campus and online courses, see the primary source:

Barkley, E. F., Major, C. H. (2016). *Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

CITATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Barkley, E. F., (2010). Quotes. Student engagement techniques: A handbook for college faculty (pp. 167–169). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Brookfield, S. D., & Preskill, S. (2005). Discussion as a way of teaching: Tools and techniques for democratic classrooms. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

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