

## Analytical Grid

Overview: Students organize, classify and analyze information, e.g., concepts or solutions to problems, using a grid or table to sort responses into categories. Categories could be basic such as strengths and weaknesses of solutions or more differentiated e.g., categorizing solutions according to theoretical assumptions. Can be done individually or in groups. After groups complete their grids the instructor can show an *expert* version, ask students to compare their work, ask questions and revise their ideas.

Example: Suppose students need to do a literature review or organize background material for a research project. If they are inexperienced with different types of sources, then a lit review is a challenging task. Using a grid approach can help them learn to identify appropriate sources relevant to their research topic.

Type 1 Grid: Pre-determined criteria and categories. The instructor provides a grid with the criteria students should use to select and evaluate sources. Instructor also provides a set of 5-6 sources for students to analyze. Students read and categorize each source with respect to each criterion. Students can complete the grid individually and then discuss in class or complete in small groups in class

Type of Source	Professional Journal [peer reviewed]	Database	Book, book chapter	Commercial newspaper, magazine, non-peer reviewed	Self-promoted, proprietary--blog
Type of Article	Primary, Research study [Peer reviewed]	Secondary source, Review of research by others [Peer reviewed ]	Personal opinion		
Research method	Quantitative	Qualitative	Anecdotal		
Relevance to research topic	Directly relevant	Somewhat related	Unrelated		

Type 2 Grid: The class develops an analytical grid. The instructor selects 5-6 sources for students to analyze and evaluate. Students work individually or in small groups to develop a set of criteria on which to evaluate sources. Groups present and compare grids. The instructor orchestrates an effort to combine the groups' grids into a single master grid with the essential criteria. Once the class has developed a comprehensive analytical grid, students can use it throughout the semester to evaluate source materials.

Reference: Called *Group Grid* in Barkley, E., Cross, P., & Major, C. (2005). *Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 211-215.