Research Question Peer Review Tool

George Mason Peer Research Mentor Production Team

October 11, 2013

1 Background

Outside of some required meetings with the GTA or professor, a lot of HNRS 110 students don't get very much feedback on their research questions. However, narrowing down your research topic to a question can be extremely difficult and one of the most important processes to guarantee a successful paper. Since professors, GTA, and PRMs don't have unlimited time, and the fact that more sets of eyes can generally give the best review of a tough question, it's clear that peer review is the best method of allowing students to get in-depth feedback and commentary on their topics/questions as they move forward in the research process.

2 Project Overview

This project is essentially a crowd-sourcing tool to allow HNRS 110 students to provide peer review and gain feedback on their Research Topics and Questions as they are narrowing their focus and moving into the writing process.

2.1 Research Topics & Questions

Students will be able to submit their research topics or questions to a community database of student submissions. This database will be accessible directly by PRMs and HNRS 110 staff.

2.2 Student Feedback

Comments Students will be able to submit comments on the topics in the database, providing detailed feedback specifically tailored to a single student's research topic or question.

Rating Students will also be able to rate topics/questions up and down. This will be slightly obscured from the user in that you don't just up-/down- vote an entry, but rate it as "Good" or "Needs Work" corresponding to +1/-1, respectively. The rating system will determine the order in which questions appear.

2.3 Moderator Interface

PRMs will have access to a special, protected "moderator" interface wherein they can monitor and control certain aspects of the student discussion. They can remove objectionable comments or research topics/questions from the database if need be. Additionally, they can alter question ratings to move them up or down. Moderators can "sticky" particularly interesting or good questions to the top of the listing.

2.4 Instructions

This project will also offer to students a comprehensive textual guide describing what is expected of them. This includes topics such as "what makes a good research question" and "what is constructive criticism." Hopefully this documentation will serve as a solid reference for students when they just want suggestions on

what their research topic/question should look like, as well as what is expected of them when submitting feedback on other students' work.

3   ToDo

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- fill out instructions page
  + in-depth description of what a good research question is
  + list of traits of good/bad questions
  + description of good/bad feedback
    o emphasize accountability + what is expected as constructive
    criticism
- continue development of feedback page
  + better comment display
  + rating of comments?
  + include username alongside comments to provide accountability
- continue development of moderator interface
  + admin registration
  + add/remove comments
  + add/remove questions
  + alter question ratings
  + "sticky" good questions
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