

## **Assignment 2. Collaborative Formulation of Application or Research Proposal**

### **Learning Analytics: Process and Theory**

#### **Spring 2016**

This assignment developed in collaboration between Baker and Gasevic  
Teachers College, Columbia University version

#### **Post due 4/1 9am**

#### **Response to Other Students' Posts due 4/8 9am**

The goal of this assignment is to help students formulate their proposals for the development of implementation or research plans in Assignment 3 and discuss their research proposals with the peers. Students will provide constructive feedback to their peers about their proposed research, the quality of which will be assessed and contribute to the final mark.

A research proposal of approximately 500 words will be written by each student, which will be shared in the course space for peer feedback. All students will be expected both to provide feedback, and to respond constructively to feedback from others. The participation in the discussions about peers' proposals will constitute 20% of the assessment weighting for Assignment 2.

There are two main tasks for this assignment:

- Application/research proposal (80% of the Assignment 2 grade)
- Responses to the posts of your peers on your plan and participation in the discussions of your peers' plans (20% of the Assignment 2 grade)

***Each student is expected to submit their implementation/research proposal in the form of a message submitted to the course discussion forum. Do not email this assignment directly to the instructor.***

#### **a) Proposal content**

The content of this assignment is a natural extension of your work done in the Assignment 1 paper. Your Assignment 2 post is expected to have the following elements.

1) *Title. (not counted towards 500 words)* The title of your proposal to be detailed in Assessment 3.

2) *Abstract.* The abstract answers the following questions: What is the problem under study? Are there other relevant solutions, and what do they fail to address (i.e., what is the motivation to study this problem)? What is your proposed approach to the problem under study? How do you plan to methodologically approach and validate the proposed approach? What are the expected results and contributions of your project?

3) *Literature review summary.* This section summarizes the main points from the relevant literature review. In this summary, you are welcome to summarize the findings presented in your Assignment 1 paper. The section is expected to cite most of the relevant references and establish explicitly how those studied references (and their findings) are of relevance for your proposal. It is expected to cite at least four (4) references in your proposal.

4) *Methodology*. A brief outline of the methodology explains the elements of the proposed approach. This section should make up the majority (~80%) of your 500 words. In addition, this section should discuss any concerns and anticipated challenges to be experienced while performing this project.

5) *List of references (not counted towards 500 words)*. Please use the same formatting as used in Assessment 1.

### **c) Format**

All proposals should be between 500 and 700 words (author information, title, and the list of references are excluded from the word count). Assignments shorter or longer than this will receive a grade penalty.

**A note on (self-)plagiarism:** As the assignments build up, you may find you want to refer to your own earlier work. It is important to reference your own previous work as you would anyone else's, paraphrasing where appropriate and enclosing exact quotes in quotation marks only if necessary. If you are concerned about this, do get in touch or post on the discussion forum – it raises interesting issues!

### **d) Where to Submit**

Submit your proposal to the Assignment 2 discussion forum. Each student is expected to submit their plan in a new thread of the forum where the title of the thread is the title of the implementation/ research plan.

### **f) Grading criteria**

*Proposal submission (80% of the Assignment 2 mark)*

The plan will be marked according to the grading criteria provided in Assignment 1.

*Responses to the posts of your peers on your plan and participation in the discussions of your peer submissions (20% of the Assignment 2 mark).*

All students are expected to provide prompt answers to posts from their peers, and to moderate the discussions initiated by their proposal posts. It is highly unfavourable if some posts of the peers remain unanswered.

For the participation grade of Assignment 2, you are also expected to participate actively in the posts made by your peers and contributions to the discussions of **at least five of your peer proposals'**. Participation in a peer's posts will not be considered just by posting a general comment (e.g., "how great the post was"). Your participation is expected to be about the content presenting with the following four levels (from the lowest to the highest quality):

1. *clarification question* – asking about some uncertain parts of a proposal submitted or sense of puzzlement about more general ideas associated with the topic of the proposal;
2. *exploration post*– brainstorming about some possible ideas or sharing information about the topic of a proposal at hand, another peer-reviewed paper for the course readings, or discussion post of another peer;
3. *integration post*–proposing a novel research topic by making use of the results presented in the previous discussions at hand to draw ideas that are formulating a hypothesis or an approach how to

solve a problem. Preferably, the result of a discussion triggered by such a post might result even in the problem formulation of the enhance existing and formulate new ideas to be pursued in the final assignment of the course.

4. *resolution post* – exploring conditions under which certain hypothesis may be valid and identification of the limitations in proposed solutions and methods by building on the literature and professional experience/practice supported with reliable citations. Typically, resolution posts build on integration posts, but other categories of posts are possible as well.

In the discussions about your peers' proposals, each student is expected to have at least one posts in category 2, one post in category 3, and one post in category 4. The rest of the questions can fit into category 1. In responding to the posts of the peers to your own questions, each student is expected to have all their posts in at least category 2, but also at least one in category 3 and one in category 4.

**Late Submissions.** Late submissions are not permitted and extensions will be made in exceptional circumstances only (e.g., health related problems).