2018 – 2019
College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Assessment of the Information Literacy Student Learning Outcome

Introduction:

In 2018 – 2019, the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences (BSS) continued its College-wide assessment strategy to evaluate BSS majors' mastery of the information literacy student learning outcome (SLO). The information literacy SLO was selected because WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) encourages students to acquire and develop higher-order intellectual skills and information literacy is considered a core competency.

Why a College-wide assessment?

In the past, each program within BSS designed and conducted its own SLO assessment. Most often, programs chose to assess content specific SLOs, which would be material covered in only one discipline (e.g., Political Science majors can demonstrate knowledge of basic structural components of national government and explain their relationship to each other and to subnational units or Anthropology majors can document, interpret, and analyze human cultural and biological diversity). These content specific SLOs, while useful and worthy of assessment, are not considered core competencies by WSCUC.

Additionally, at times, many programs' assessment strategies had flaws, which minimized the value of the final data reported. Some of these problems included, but were not limited to: not informing the students their work was being used for assessment, not using a rubric, or if a rubric was used, not providing the students the rubric in advance, and not having the assessors normed.

Occasionally, different programs would select the same SLO to assess. When the same SLO was assessed, different rubrics would be used to evaluate the students' work, so the results were not comparable. Due to these inconsistencies, the College was unable to evaluate the students' proficiency of the WSCUC core competencies at or near the point of graduation.

Furthermore, one of the benefits of a College-wide assessment strategy is to be able to divert resources where they are most needed. If the assessment reveals a College-wide student weakness, the College can provide more funds for tutoring and utilize the BSS Student Success Center to help provide assistance to the students.

What is good direct assessment?

Countless books articulately and thoroughly discuss and explain quality assessment practices (see Appendix 1). This report will not belabor or dwell on the qualities of good assessment techniques. A very few of the main requisites for proper assessment include:

1. A clear and measurable SLO;
2. The SLO, the assignment, the rubric and how all three relate to each other are clearly communicated to the students before the assignment is due;
3. The assessors are normed or calibrated prior to their assessment work taking place;
4. The assessors have reasonable inter-rater reliability, and;
5. The assessment leads to actionable results that are shared with the faculty and broader constituencies as appropriate.

How did BSS design and conduct its assessment?:

The following steps were utilized to design and assess the information literacy SLO:

1. A draft rubric was created;
2. There were two meetings held during fall 2018 to discuss, refine, modify, and finally agree to the information literacy rubric (see Appendix 2);
3. Each BSS assessment program facilitator worked with his/her department chair and the appropriate faculty to select a course "at or near the point of degree completion" to provide the student work (see Appendix 3);
4. The rubric was circulated to the faculty whose courses were providing the student work;
5. Due to the number of the faculty participating in the assessment, two norming sessions were held and the facilitators and their teams attended one of the two norming sessions, and;
6. The facilitators and their teams assessed the student work during the summer or fall of 2019 and submitted their reports during fall or winter of 2019/20.

Results:

The evaluation of BSS majors' information literacy skills (N = 325) revealed mixed results (please see Table 1). In the area of "attribution," 67 percent of students "met or exceeded expectations," which is below the 70 percent benchmark. In the "evaluation of sources" and "communication of evidence" areas, students "met or exceeded expectations" at 71 and 72 percent respectively. Students' scores for content, organization, and delivery were consistent (2.80, 2.84, and 2.87 respectively). It should be noted the mode scores for all categories was three or "meets expectations." With regard to the reliability of the data, of the 14 programs participating, 13 programs provided data to compile an inter-rater reliability (IRR) of the assessors, which was averaged at .49 (.80 the highest and .28 the lowest).

Discussion:

When averaged across all three categories, 70 percent of BSS student information literacy data rated students as "meets or exceeds expectations." It should also be noted in an exit survey to graduating BSS seniors in Fall 2019, 75 percent of respondents agreed they feel competent in the area of information literacy. While this assessment is only one snapshot in time, the evidence demonstrates most of the BSS students sampled are competent in their information literacy skills, however, there is room for improvement, especially in the "attribution" area of evaluation. These findings, while encouraging, should also inspire faculty to maintain and increase the level of information literacy in their courses and across the curriculum. Experts agree it is important to be critical of the significance of one assessment result. This report creates a baseline for BSS majors' competency in information literacy and begins the conversation in the College about how to help its students achieve competency.

As these results are understood and disseminated, BSS will implement the following strategies:

1. Ensure the results are distributed College-wide;
2. Discuss the results with chairs and faculty;
3. Encourage faculty to analyze their program's results and discuss methods to build information literacy into courses and develop best practices to increase students' competence in this area, and;
4. Continue to provide College-wide support individually to each program and through the BSS Student Success Center.

Table 1:

	Exceeds Expectations (4)		Meets Expectations (3)		Needs Improvement (2)		Below Expectations (1)		Total	Median	Mode
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f		
Attribution	115	24	205	43	112	23	50	10	482	2.80	3
Evaluation of Sources	92	19	247	52	110	23	27	6	476	2.84	3
Communication of Evidence*	100	21	245	51	118	24	22	5	485	2.87	3
Average										**2.84**	**3**

* rounding error

Weaknesses:

The results of this assessment report should be tempered for several reasons:

1. The IRR for this sample was low. While the evaluators completed a "norming" process, it is clear the evaluators need to have better communication during the assessment process to minimize scoring discrepancies.
    a. For the second year, the IRR was low. Likely part of the concern is the lag between the time faculty are "normed" and the assessment begins. Typically the "norming" occurs in April, but it can be until September before the assessment takes place. The College will need to address this recurring issue.

Moving forward:

For this academic year, BSS will assess the critical thinking SLO. The BSS assessment coordinator will attempt to improve on last year's assessment process to create a more refined and impactful assessment, including increasing the IRR. As assessing critical thinking is challenging, the faculty will need to be diligent to ensure student artifacts meet the established rubric.

Contact:

For questions or concerns regarding this report, please contact Associate Dean Ryan Patten at rpatten@csuchico.edu or 898-6171.

APPENDIX 1

Allen, M. J. (2004). *Assessing academic programs in higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Allen, M. J. (2006). *Assessing general education programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Banta, T. W., & Associates. (2002). *Building a scholarship of assessment*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bresciani, M. J. (2006). *Outcomes-based academic and co-curricular program review*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Driscoll, A., & Wood, S. (2007). *Outcomes-based assessment for learner-centered education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Kuh, G. D., Ikenberry, S. O., Jankowski, N. A., Cain, T. R., Ewell, P., Hutchings, P., and Kinzie, J. (2014). *Using Student Evidence to Improve Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Suskie, L. (2nd edition; 2009). *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.

APPENDIX 2

Information Literacy FINAL				
	Exceeds Expectations (4)	**Meets Expectations (3)**	**Needs Improvement (2)**	**Below Expectations (1)**
Attribution	*Shows a sophisticated level of understanding for when and how to give attribution.* • Documents sources consistently and completely • Uses in-text citation and notes correctly and consistently • Cites non-textual sources consistently • Names and labels figures and/or graphs clearly and completely.	*Attribution indicates understanding of the rationale for and various mechanisms of citation.* • Documents sources throughout with occasional errors or inconsistencies. • Uses in-text citation and notes with occasional errors or inconsistencies • Cites non-textual sources with relative consistency • Usually names and labels figures and/or graphs clearly and completely.	*Missteps in attribution interfere with the argument or point to fundamental misunderstandings.* • Frequently documents sources incorrectly or leaves out some citations. • Frequent errors and inconsistencies with in-text citation and notes • Does not consistently cite non-textual sources • Names and labels figures and/or graphs inconsistently.	*Use of evidence and citation is poor, making it difficult to evaluate the argument or sources.* • Displays fundamental and consistent errors in source documentation • Does not include or contains significant inconsistencies with in-text citation and notes • Does not name, title, or cite non-textual sources • Does not name or label figures and/or graphs.
Evaluation of Sources	*Source materials employed demonstrate expertise and sophisticated independent thought.* • Demonstrates sophisticated scope and awareness of literature and community of scholarship • Uses a variety of appropriate and authoritative sources • Always distinguishes between types of sources (e.g., primary v. secondary, scholarly v. popular, fact v. opinion) • Demonstrates a thorough critical exploration and knowledge of evidence, and of the sources selected	*Source materials are adequate and appropriate but lack variety or depth.* • Explores supporting sources and community of scholarship but might overlook important avenues • Relies on an adequate number of appropriate sources •Usually distinguishes between types of sources (e.g., primary v. secondary, scholarly v. popular, fact v. opinion) •Demonstrates a preliminary critical exploration and knowledge of evidence, and of the sources selected	*Source materials used are inadequate.* • Exhibits weak awareness of the literature or other sources that could strengthen claim(s) or argument(s) • Relies on too few or largely inappropriate sources • Does not consistently distinguish between types of sources (e.g., primary v. secondary, scholarly v. popular, fact v. opinion) •Demonstrates little critical exploration and of the sources selected	*Source materials are absent or do not contribute to claim(s) or argument(s).* • No evidence of awareness of the literature or other sources that could strengthen claim(s) or argument(s) • When included, sources are too few **and** inappropriate • No distinction between types of sources (e.g., primary v. secondary, scholarly v. popular, fact v. opinion) •No evidence of critical exploration and of the sources selected
Communication of Evidence	*Evidence is integrated and synthesized expertly to support claims.* • Consistently presents evidence to support claim(s) and argument(s) • Fully integrates evidence into the argument/narrative • Uses evidence instrumentally towards supporting author's argument • Distinction between own ideas and ideas of others is consistently clear • Demonstrates a strong understanding of literature gaps and/or significantly adds to a scholarly conversation	*Proficient synthesis and integration of evidence.* • Generally employs evidence to support claim(s) and argument(s) • Mostly integrates evidence into the argument/narrative • Frequently demonstrates using evidence instrumentally toward supporting author's argument • Distinction between own ideas and ideas of others is usually clear • Demonstrates an adequate understanding literature gaps and/or an adequate contribution to a scholarly conversation	*Weak attempts at synthesis or integration* • Sporadically uses evidence to support claim(s) or argument(s) • Rarely integrates evidence into the argument/narrative • Usually does not demonstrate using evidence instrumentally toward supporting author's argument • Consistently blurs distinction between own ideas and ideas of others • Demonstrates a weak understanding of literature gaps and/or has little contribution to a scholarly conversation	*No evidence of attempt at synthesis or integration.* • Claim(s) or argument(s) lack necessary evidence • Fails to integrate evidence into the argument/narrative • No demonstration of using evidence instrumentally toward supporting author's argument • No distinction between own ideas and ideas of others • Does not identify gaps in the literature or contribute to a scholarly conversation

APPENDIX 3

BSS Courses Providing Student Information Literacy Assignments			
Name of Program	**Course Number**	**Title of Course**	**Students Assessed**
Anthropology	304, 412, 423, & 496(W)	Language and Culture, Human Variation, Human Behavioral Ecology, and History of Method and Theory	19
Child Development	495	Senior Seminar in Child Development*	35
Economics	431(W) & 499H	Theory of Money and Honors Independent Research in Economics	28
Geography and Planning	407(W) & 438	Earth Systems Analysis of Global Change and Urban Geography	21
Health and Community Services -- Health Administration	434	Healthcare Quality Management	15
Health and Community Services -- Health Education	425	Research Methods	35
Multicultural and Gender Studies	310 & 410	Intro to LGBTQ** and Latinx Gender and Sexualities	12
Criminal Justice	331	Intro to Research Methods	13
International Relations	331	Intro to Research Methods	8
General Political Science	331	Intro to Research Methods	13
Public Administration^		*Did not participate*	0
Psychology	401(W) & 499H	Capstone in Psychology* & Capstone Honors	56
Sociology	441	Public Sociology	20
Social Science	495	Capstone Seminar in Social Science*	25
Social Work	435	Social Work Methods	25
		Total N =	**325**

* Capstone course
** General Education Course
^ Chose to not participate