Assessment Group* Core Competency Report

AY: 2020-2021

Core Competency: Information Literacy

Introduction

Woodbury University has implemented a model for collecting and reporting student achievement on the 5 Core Competencies (CC) for undergraduates. The model is meant to allow programs to assess each competency in a way most meaningful for their students.

The model calls for the Assessment Group (AG) to collect the results of program-level assessment and then synthesize the results for the university. In 2019-20, the AG began a process to provide programs feedback on their assessment activities and to highlight exemplary assessment activities. This is done via a brief summer meeting among the program chair, their assessment officer, and the Director of Assessment & Educational Effectiveness.

This report will first describe the process the AG engaged in to synthesize the results submitted by each program in their summary report in spring. Next, the report presents the results of program level assessment at the university level. Finally, the report presents action items that any program can take to improve student achievement on the core competency.

Outcome(s)

In this report, the CC we are reporting on is Information Literacy (IL). Examples of outcomes for this CC include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Effectively acquires and critically evaluates information and its sources
- ✓ Properly integrates and organizes relevant information
- ✓ Ethically and effectively documents relevant information

Processes used to synthesize program level CC Assessment

In spring 2021, 10 programs submitted a summary of their Information Literacy assessment to their school's Assessment Officer or to the Director of Assessment & Educational Effectiveness (AEE). The AG compiled the CC Information Literacy summaries in Digication. Synthesizing findings across programs was challenging for some AG members because the findings were not all written in the same style or format. In addition, some programs presented more detailed information about results, rubrics, their assessment processes, etc., than others. Our goal as the AG is to consider the findings as part of the school results overall, leave the details behind, and focus on the big picture.

The Director of AEE compiled and summarized the AG's responses to the following 4 questions for each program:

1. What were the program's findings related to this Core Competency?

2. What was the program's need for additional resources?

---

* The Assessment Group comprises the Assessment Officers of the three Schools, the College, the Library, Academic Affairs, and the Writing Program. It is convened by Assessment and Educational Effectiveness, in Office of Academic Affairs.

3. Did the program describe excellent practices in assessment we want to share with other programs?

4. Were there issues or challenges in assessment we want to address with the program?

This report will cover the AG's responses to question 1 in the Results section; then some attention is paid to the AG's responses to questions 2-4 in the Close the Loop section. Finally, recommendations for improving Information Literacy are offered.

Closing the Loop. The AG completed 2 steps to close the loop for Information Literacy assessment. First, each school's Assessment Officer and the Director of AEE met with programs individually to review the AG's feedback on questions 3-4: areas of strength and need for resources for improvement, as gathered from the summary descriptions.

At the aggregated level, areas of assessment strength and need for improvement are presented here:

Assessment process strengths included, but were not limited to:

- Having more than one faculty member involved in assessment activities
- Using an effective rubric
- Having clearly stated program outcomes to assess
- Having a strong close-the-loop process
- Calibrating faculty ratings of student work
- Assessing more than one level of the same outcome
- Assessing only one or two outcomes at a time
- Aligning proposed changes with results
- Including examples to illustrate the results
- Using more than one assessment method
- Using Annotated Bibliographies to evaluate student level of information literacy
- Focusing on more than one aspect of Information Literacy
- Having students critique each other's work

Assessment process areas for improvement included, but were not limited to:

- Increasing the sample size of student evidence
- Making rubrics more useful and usable
- Involving more faculty in the assessment activities
- Closely aligning proposed changes with results
- Refining learning outcomes to be more measurable

The second step of the close the loop process was this report, drafted by the Director of AEE and sent to the AG for their recommendations to the university. It is being disseminated to all faculty, chairs, and deans. In addition, this annual Close the Loop Report is available on the AEE SharePoint site.

Results

What conclusions might we draw from the assessment findings regarding our students' performance? Here we describe the strengths and areas for improvement that were common across programs. It is important to keep in mind that each program had their own student evidence and rubric for judging that evidence.

Student *strengths* in Information Literacy

- Finding and evaluating credible sources
- Synthesizing information
- Proper use of reference materials
- Proper use of citations (limited)
- Attribution of original source or credit for intellectual property such as music, software
- Articulating research agenda

Student *areas for improvement* in Information Literacy

- Citations or proper attributions for others' work
- Recognizing importance of scholarly, peer-reviewed journals as sources
- Finding scholarly or academic-level resources
- Integrating and/or synthesizing sources into work product
- Evaluating proper reference materials
- Differentiating between primary and secondary sources
- Use of library resources and databases

It should be noted that locating and citing scholarly sources were reported by some programs as a strength and others as an area for improvement. Also, some work products showed strong use of IL at the start, then less at the end. It is possible that students get more instructor attention and feedback at the start of their projects, then rush at the end to complete them; this might account for that decline within products.

Assessment to Action: Recommendations for the University

In this section, we report possible actions for improving student achievement in Information Literacy across programs. The first set of recommendations was gleaned from the programs' proposed and/or completed action steps reported in their summary report. The second set of recommendations comes from the AG.

Recommendations from the Programs
Ask your library liaison to make a presentation to your students about the appropriate ways to credit intellectual property.
Create a policy for the use and attribution of intellectual property; display the policy in your SharePoint page, your syllabus, and/or on Moodle; let faculty know your policy.
Connect the students with your library liaison for help with researching the literature.

Recommendations from the <u>Programs</u>
Create IL-related lessons shared across sections of the same course, and across your curriculum; scaffold the lessons to include ever higher levels of IL achievement. For example: Consider using a similar, but scaffolded (increasingly complex) annotated bibliography assignment throughout the curriculum to prepare for capstone.
Take one-to-one meetings with students to review important IL concepts and practices in your discipline.
Review your curriculum map to see where IL is Introduced, Practiced (Developed or Reinforced), and/or Mastered; look for gaps and address those gaps with resources from the library, additional small research assignments, and/or training for faculty.
Ask the Writing Center to add IL support to what you are already doing in your courses.
Be sure your assignment instructions and grading rubrics emphasize the IL components you think are most important; this may include synthesizing ideas from various sources, locating and citing scholarly sources, etc.

Recommendations from the <u>Assessment Group</u>
Help students improve the development of their research questions by asking them, "What are you trying to solve?"
At each year of the curriculum, what level of APA Publication Style expertise should students have? For example, if they are in a 300-level course, how much should they know versus students enrolled in a 400-level course.
Schedule Bibliographic Instruction sessions with a librarian to get students to utilize library resources. Bring librarians into the classroom to review research methods targeted to the course or assignment.
Hold a department meeting to address where research or citation is practiced throughout the curriculum.
Increase use of library and/or Writing Center to address IL skills needed at both the Bachelor's and the Master's level.
Investigate and determine if a few short research papers might be more effective regarding learning how to research, compared to one longer research paper.
Ask for IL peer reviews among students that include creating their own IL rubric, and include their assessments in yearly reports.
Where possible, link assessment to professional accreditation language.
Specific to Architecture: Another source to triangulate visual literacy assessment and skills is the ARLIS Report for Art/Architecture/Design: https://www.arlisna.org/images/researchreports/ARLISNA_Report_ArtArchDesignInfoComp2019.pdf