

General Education Assessment Report 2013-14 Results for Information Literacy & Research

Executive Summary

In May 2014, faculty assessed 30 written artifacts to determine the extent to which students were achieving the specified outcomes for general education in lower division Information Literacy & Research courses. The outcome that received the highest ratings was students' ability to *access information effectively and efficiently*. The lowest rated outcome was students' ability to *critically evaluate information and its sources*. Faculty raters recommended more opportunities for instructors across colleges to discuss Information Literacy & Research outcomes and collaborate on teaching and learning strategies that can develop these skills. Faculty raters recommended stronger communication and further supporting the selection of artifacts appropriate for an assessment summit.

Information Literacy & Research Assessment Report

As part of Old Dominion University's general education requirement, students must complete the Information Literacy & Research requirement at the lower division level. The lower division Information Literacy & Research (G) way of knowing courses are taught across colleges. The criteria approved by Faculty Senate for G courses includes:

1. Students will be able to determine the nature and extent of the information needed for research
2. Students will be able to access information effectively and efficiently
3. Students will be able critically evaluate information and information sources, such as library databases, collections, or websites appropriate to the field of research
4. Students will be able to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose or to complete a specific project
5. Students will be able to understand the economic, social, legal, and ethical issues surrounding the access and use of information
6. Students will be able to use information ethically and lawfully

The General Education Assessment Committee (GEAC) adopted the Information Literacy & Research definition developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and found in their Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics. Information literacy is defined as the, "ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively and responsibly use and share that information for the problem at hand" (Rhodes, 2010).

For the most part, the AAC&U outcomes align well with the Information Literacy & Research outcomes at ODU. For the purposes of general education assessment, outcomes from the AAC&U VALUE Rubric and the ODU General Education Curriculum were aligned and the nationally validated instrument, with a few adaptations recommended by faculty, was used to assess student learning (see table 1 below).

Table 1. Information Literacy & Research Alignment of Outcomes

ODU Student Learning Outcomes	AAC&U VALUE Rubric and Outcomes	ODU Assessment and Rubric Outcomes
1. Students will be able to determine the nature and extent of the information needed for research	a. Determine the Extent of Information Needed	SLO 1: Students will be able to determine the nature and extent of the information needed for research
2. Students will be able to access information effectively and efficiently	b. Access the Needed Information	SLO 2: Students will be able to access information effectively and efficiently
3. Students will be able critically evaluate information and information sources, such as library databases, collections, or websites appropriate to the field of research	c. Evaluation Information and Its Sources Critically	SLO 3: Students will be able to critically evaluate information and information sources, such as library databases, collections, or websites appropriate to the field of research
4. Students will be able to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose or to complete a specific project	d. Use Information Effectively to Accomplish a Specific Purpose	SLO 4: Students will be able to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose or to complete a specific project
5. Students will be able to understand the economic, social, legal, and ethical issues surrounding the access and use of information 6. Students will be able to use information ethically and lawfully	e. Access and Use Information Ethically and Legally	SLO 5: Students demonstrate awareness and comprehension of legal, ethical, and security standards in acquiring, interpreting and disseminating information (to include the comprehension of any prevailing economic and/or social issues associated with the access and use of information)

Faculty determined that the fifth outcome, comprehension of legal, ethical, and security standards, was generally not captured through any specific written artifact. Rather, the assessment of outcome was largely addressed through exam questions. For this reason, SLO 5 was not assessed through this process.

Methodology

A rubric developed by faculty teaching G courses and adapted from the Information Literacy VALUE rubric was used to assess Information Literacy & Research. In fall 2013 and spring 2014, faculty teaching general education G courses in IT 150G Basic Information Literacy and Research, STEM 251G Computer Literacy: Communication and Information, HLTH 120G Information Literacy for Health Professions, CS 120G Introduction to Information Literacy and Research and CS 121G Introduction to Information Literacy and Research for Scientists, were asked how and where students demonstrated the Information Literacy & Research outcomes. Faculty members were able to identify an artifact or series of artifacts that aligned with the outcomes and embedded within the courses. The courses used for assessment came from the College of Business and Public Administration, College of Education, College of Health Sciences, and College of Sciences.

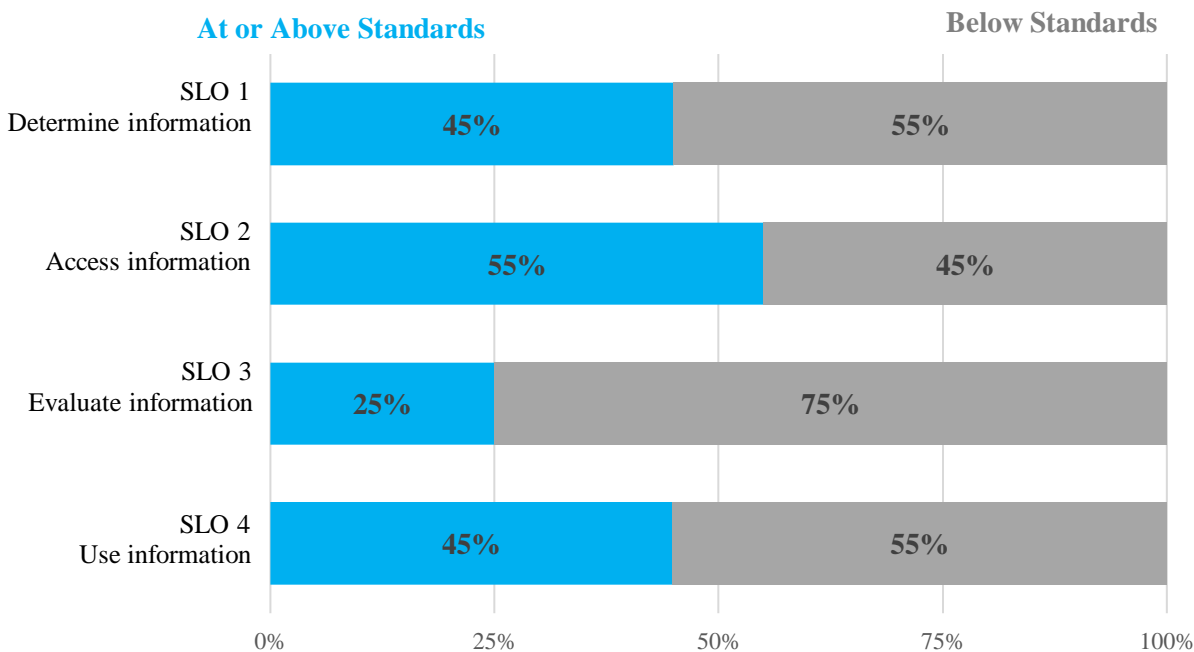
A two-day assessment summit was convened in May 2014, where four faculty read and rated a random sample of student artifacts from the courses. During the morning of the first day, a calibration session was conducted. First, faculty thoroughly reviewed and discussed the rubric and then independently applied the rubric to three sample artifacts. Raters shared their ratings and discussed any differences that arose after each “round” of rating. This discussion helped faculty come to a common understanding of what the student learning outcomes (SLO) meant and what to look for when rating the artifacts using the rubric’s scale: exceeds standard, meets standard, approaches standard, needs attention. Once individual ratings on a shared artifact did not differ by more than one point, raters were given a set of 15 artifacts to rate. The artifacts were read twice by faculty and scored using the rubric. If faculty ratings differed by more than 1 point on the majority (50% or more) of the outcomes, the artifact was sent to a third reader.

Three of the 30 artifacts reviewed required a third read due to discrepancies in ratings. A full description of the methodology, including inter-rater reliability data and the rubric, will be made available on the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Assessment’s website: <https://tinyurl.com/geneduc>

Results

An overview of the findings by SLO is presented in figure 1. The Information Literacy & Research outcome *accessing information effectively and efficiently* received the highest ratings (SLO 2: 55% exceeds and meets standards; 45% approaches standards and needs attention). The lowest rated outcome was *critically evaluating information and its sources* (SLO 3: 25% exceeds and meets standards; 75% approaches standards and needs attention).

Figure 1. Information Literacy & Research assessment results



Faculty Rater Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion

At the end of the second day, faculty were asked to reflect upon the strengths and weaknesses of students. Overall, faculty noted that students showed strength in their ability to access information effectively and efficiently (SLO 2). Students were able to identify a complete research question or thesis statement. The research question or thesis statement defined the scope of the project completely. The student stated key words and/or subject terms and the types of information (sources) selected related to concepts of interest expressed and/or address research question. Raters observed that students demonstrated familiarity and an ability to determine the nature and extent of the information needed for research (SLO 1). Raters also found that students were able to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose or to complete a specific project (SLO 4). Students demonstrated this by organizing, synthesizing and communicating data from information sources, which allowed the student to address the stated question or purpose.

Student performance was weakest in the area of critically evaluating information and its sources (SLO 3). Students who did not meet the standard demonstrated a limited to no ability to identify their own assumptions and those of other scholars in a manner relevant to the positions presented in the project or paper. They demonstrated some to no ability to determine objectivity from subjectivity in information sources when needed.

Recommendations

Faculty raters identified the following recommendations to improve Information Literacy & Research outcomes:

- Provide opportunities for instructors across colleges to discuss these outcomes and collaborate on teaching and learning strategies that can develop Information Literacy & Research skills.
- Support stronger communication and selection of artifacts appropriate for an assessment summit for future assessments.

Faculty Senate Recommendations

The assessment report was shared with the Faculty Senate Committee A in 2014-2015 and no additional recommendations were made.

Work Cited

Rhodes, T. L. (ed.). (2010). *Assessing outcomes and improving achievement: Tips and tools for using rubrics*. Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities. Also available online at <http://www.aacu.org/value/>