Assessment Reporting
Spring 2009 – Spring 2010

Oct 2009 Interim Report

Program Information

Degree Program(s):	MLIS	**Department:**	Libr. & Inform. Science
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Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

Core Competency L: understand the nature of research, research methods and research findings; retrieve, evaluate and synthesize scholarly and professional literature for informed decision-making by specific client groups

Evidence for Need:

In 2006, curriculum review by SLIS faculty determined that students did not clearly understand the difference between scholarly research and reference work, and that not enough students were interested in or prepared to undertake a master's thesis (one of the culminating experience options). An environmental scan also showed that the top nationally ranked schools of Library and Information Science all required a course in scholarly research and research methodologies, which SLIS did not.

Also in 2006, SLIS defined and adopted 15 Core Competencies of the profession as Program (Student) Learning Outcomes. In Spring 2007 we began collecting data on the performance of graduating students in the LIBR 289 (e-portfolio) culminating experience course for the different Core Competencies / Learning Outcomes. Since we were looking at 15 learning outcomes, we decided to collect data on a 3-semester cycle (5 each semester) – which meant that data on Core Competency L (understand the nature of research, research methods and research findings; retrieve, evaluate and synthesize scholarly and professional literature for informed decision-making by specific client groups) would be collected for the first time in Spring 2008 from LIBR 289 students, and analyzed and reported on in the Fall 2008 SJSU WASC Report.

Analysis of the Spring 2008 data collected in the LIBR 289 culminating experience course on Core Competency L showed this SLO had a lower percentage of submissions needing zero or one revision than other SLOs. This finding matched the faculty perceptions in 2006/2007 that students needed more help understanding what this SLO meant and adequately demonstrating their mastery of this SLO. This was in line with what faculty expected to see, since we knew that a majority of the students who were enrolled in the Spring 2008 LIBR 289 culminating experience course had not taken the LIBR 285: Research Methods in Library and Information Science course.

Assessment Actions Taken:

Since faculty were concerned about student performance on this very important SLO, and to be in alignment with other top-ranked LIS schools, as part of a planned review of the MLIS curriculum SLIS made LIBR 285: Research Methods in Library and Information Science a required course for the MLIS degree for all students entering the program as of Spring 2007.

Before this was a required course, 1 - 2 sections of this course were offered every Fall semester (once a year).

After this became a required course, SLIS began offering LIBR 285 ever semester AND developed sections focused on specific topics of interest – from the original overview of research methodologies course to seven different topics (overview, action, historical, evaluation, post-modern, ethnography, youth services).

The number of sections offered has grown to approximately 5 sections each Fall and Spring, and 2 in Summer (12 a year).

Evidence for Impact:

The next semester when student performance data in LIBR 289 on Core Competency L is scheduled to be collected is Fall 2009. We expect that more than half of the students enrolled in LIBR 289 in Fall 2009 will have entered in Spring 2007 or later, and so will have taken the (now required) LIBR 285: Research Methods course. Our expectations are that as more students take the research course, the data collected in the culminating experience course on the research SLO (Core Competency L) will show an improvement in student performance on that SLO.

Therefore, after the Fall 2009 semester ends, we will have the data needed to "close the loop" on this particular program SLO.

Our School is large and it takes time (given our 15 SLOs and the cycle of data collection and analysis) to collect and assess evidence of curricular change.

It is also difficult to know what data is most important to collect and how frequently. If we had known about this "closing loop" assignment from the beginning (in Spring 2007 when we started looking at our Core Competencies as Program SLOs), we could have made sure to collect data on Core Competency L each semester, and not have established our current rotating cycle of data collection and analysis.