2010

CARL Research Award [awarded by the California Academic and Research Libraries Association]

Shannon M. Staley, San Jose State University
**PART II: RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**TITLE OF PROJECT**

**STANDARDIZED INFORMATION LITERACY ASSESSMENT: AN INSTITUTION-SPECIFIC APPROACH**

**ABSTRACT OF PROJECT**

Please succinctly explain in three labeled sections (500 words maximum):

a. the problem statement
b. the project objectives
c. the specific methods for achieving these objectives. Please connect the budget items and estimates to the methods when possible so that the reviewers will understand how you propose to use the funding to address the project objectives.

### A. Problem Statement

As the Library and Information Science profession has developed a range of core competencies for information literacy based on the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, the need to assess students’ progressive understanding of those competencies has become critical to determining the effectiveness of various library instruction approaches. Currently, there is no standardized or uniform way of assessing student information literacy skills at our library. A review of the literature reveals that many assessment surveys in the field are created without a process of standardization to determine whether respondents interpret questions correctly. Moreover, most that are standardized, such as the Information and Communication Technology Literacy Test (iSkills) and the Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills Test (SAILS), provide large-scale, general measures of student information literacy competence, lacking ties to institution-specific learning outcomes. Consequently, the investigators developed an application that enables librarian instructors to select expertly evaluated questions from a database that match the specific learning objectives of courses taught at our university. Additionally, this application will record empirically sound data from each library instruction session through the use of TTEST statistical analysis. This standardized assessment tool will be used in Spring 2010 to collect data that provides a more accurate picture of student learning, thus optimizing the ability to improve library instruction and the student educational experience.

### B. Project Objectives

- Implement a consistent and comprehensive means of information literacy assessment
- Apply learning outcomes based on ACRL standards
- Develop assessment instruments customizable to specific disciplines and courses at our university
- Evaluate programmatic strengths and weaknesses through a systematic approach to data analysis
- Provide an opportunity to improve library instruction through a more accurate reading of student learning
- Share findings with other library professionals

### C. Methods for Achieving Objectives

- In coordination with the Center for Assessment, develop valid test questions tied to ACRL standards and learning outcomes that meet institutional needs – **Done**
- Enter questions into a locally-developed, online assessment tool for administering pre and post tests to students during information literacy instruction sessions in the Spring 2010 semester – **Done**
- Obtain approval from the campus Institutional Review Board for the use of human subjects – **January 2010**
- With funding from the CARL Research Award, hire a graduate student assistant to help administer surveys, apply TTEST analysis of mean scores, and document findings – **March 2010**
- Target specific courses, and work with disciplinary faculty to confirm student learning outcomes and schedule library instruction sessions – **March 2010**
- Use the assessment tool to create customized survey achievement tests for select Education, Health Sciences and Nursing library instruction courses – **April – May 2010**
- Analyze findings and modify the instructional program prior to the Fall 2010 semester – **Summer 2010**
- Develop a web site to share findings with other library professionals and provide open source access to database tables – **Summer 2010**
- Prepare a summary of the research study for a CARL publication – **Fall 2010**
SIGNIFICANCE

Please explain the significance of the work to the library profession and CARL in particular (300 words maximum).

Our assessment tool will be made open source to California librarians and others in the library profession to adapt. With the lack of valid psychometric tools available that address institution-specific needs, others stand to benefit significantly in using this tool and the statistical report features it offers for evaluating their own instruction programs. A greater level of interpretive power carries the weight of rigor and respect in the higher education community. Optimizing the ability to illustrate effective modes of teaching will not only enhance student learning but strengthen librarian ties with disciplinary faculty, bolster documentation during the accreditation process, provide publication opportunities, document effectiveness in the academic assignment, and increase possibilities for campus funding support of library services.

The benefits of this study are aligned with CARL’s constitutional principles in providing members a means of improving approaches to instruction (Purpose 1, see below), encouraging the cooperative effort of librarians and disciplinary faculty in reviewing student information literacy skills to better understand instructional efficacy (Purpose 2, see below), sharing findings with other library professionals by presenting a summary of the research study in a CARL publication (Purpose 3, see below), providing open source access to the assessment tool application (Purpose 3, see below), and, through the use of our tool, supporting a university system-wide approach to standardized assessment to improve library services (Purpose 4, see below):

1. provide opportunities for the professional growth of its members by conducting workshops and arranging programs
2. encourage the exchange of ideas and information relating to library cooperation and development
3. disseminate educational information oriented to those working in academic and research libraries
4. support and, when appropriate, participate in programs of other regional and local organizations in California in order to promote and improve library service to the academic and research community
Shannon Staley, PI  
**Title:** Standardized Information Literacy Assessment: An Institution-Specific Approach  
**Project Period:**

**Personnel**  
Student: $15/hr, 120 hrs  
1800

**Fringe**  
Student Fringe, 9.5%  
171

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