

Report on COUN 505 Research Methods Informational Literacy Project

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Course:

COUN 505: Research Methods (starting in the Spring of 2015)

Student Learning Outcomes related to Informational Literacy Concepts:

Class Student Learning Objective 2: Students will demonstrate an ability to interpret research data from counseling journals and to assess the utility of the research.

Related Assessment Activity: Journal Article Critiques

This is the second Student Learning Objective of the class and is most closely related to the first, third, fourth, and sixth threshold concepts in Informational Literacy, scholarship is a conversation, authority is contextual and constructed, format as process, and information has value, respectively (Gibson & Jacobson, 2014). This class helps master's students in counseling to understand research methods and be able to understand and evaluate counseling literature.

The students completed assignments, including journal article critiques. The students searched for, found, evaluated, and shared empirical research studies related to the counseling. After completing their evaluation, each student completed an oral presentation to the class (information literacy concept of *scholarship is a conversation*; Gibson & Jacobson, 2014) where they shared what the researchers did, what the researchers found, and what the students took from the article (information literacy concept of *information has value*). The class discussed and critiqued the articles after the presentation, which shows the context of the study and highlights the generalizability of it (information literacy concept of *authority is contextual and constructed*; Gibson & Jacobson, 2014).

In the class, the students were taught how to search for solid sources, and librarian George Aulisio gave a presentation and demonstration on finding different kinds of sources (internet resources, scholarly articles, specifically peer-reviewed sources, etc.). With George Aulisio and after he left, the class discussed how to find and evaluate sources and information. For instance, the journal articles that the students have to complete are required to come from a journal from a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA). Through searching for empirical research articles and reading the articles to select one for the assignment, they are learning that the format of research articles parallels the actual process of conducting research. This was reinforced in class to instill this understanding (information literacy concept of *format as process*; Gibson & Jacobson, 2014).

Assessment:

To assess if the students are able to effectively learning, they completed written papers critiquing the journal articles that they found and gave an oral presentation on the article and the utility of the article for counselors. I created a rubric (separate from the one used for grading) to see how students are meeting the fourth and sixth threshold concepts of Information Literacy, format as process and information has value (Gibson & Jacobson, 2014). The students were required to critique the components of the article (*format as process*) and to critique the utility, or "takeaways," of the article (*information has value*), and the rubric will focus on the mastery of these two components.

Process:

- The rubric created to assess the fourth and sixth information literacy concepts (*format as process* and *information has value*).
- George Aulisio's presented on how to find and evaluate different sources on February 10th
- Students turned in their journal article critiques throughout the course of the semester (2-4 students turned in their paper and gave an oral presentation each week of the class to spread out the presentations over the course of the semester).
- Classroom lecture and discussion was oriented to understanding the research process, how to appropriately conduct research, and how to evaluate completed research.
- I used grading rubrics for their class grade and used the created rubric to evaluate how the students performed on the Information Literacy components of *format as process* and *information has value*.

Outcomes:

The data from the rubric (see Appendix A) revealed that all students (N = 12) were able to find an empirical journal article from a division of the ACA. As for the aspects regarding *format as process*, the vast majority of students (92%) were able to accurately identify the parts of the empirical journal article (92%) and were able to accurately critique the methods and results of the article (83%). About 92% of students were able to satisfy the objectives for providing a depth of the application of the article to counseling practice, and the remaining 8% were able to partial satisfy the objectives.

For the aspects of the assignment regarding the information literacy concept of *information has value*, all students (100%) were able to find an empirical journal article, and all articles were from a divisional journal of ACA. Most (75%) of students were able to satisfy the objectives for going into appropriate depth in critiquing the research methods and findings. One-quarter were able to partially satisfy this objective.

Next Steps:

In Fall 2015, I will be teaching this class again, and I plan to continue to discuss and provide information on the research process and will spend more time on how to evaluate research and appropriately conduct research. It seems that the students benefited from this discussion in overall doing very well in the ability to understand the information provided in the empirical journal articles, though a substantial minority seemed to not grasp the need for deeper critique of the research methods and findings. I plan to spend more time discussing this and to have the class critique two articles together in class (instead of one) to aid the class in gaining more mastery of this ability.

Appendix A

Rubric to Assess Information Literacy

Format as Process:

Correctly identified the parts of the empirical journal article Yes No

Accurately critiqued the methods and results of the article Yes No

Depth of description of the application of this article for counselors: _____

3 – Satisfied	2 – Partially Satisfied	1 - Did not Satisfy
Was able to discuss at least 2 uses for the article that were appropriate based on the findings of the journal article	Was able to discuss at least one use of the article in an appropriate way based on the findings of the journal article	Was not able to discuss practical uses for the findings of the article or discussed findings in ways that misunderstood the findings of the journal article

Information Has Value:

Was able to find an empirical journal article Yes No

Was able to find an article from an ACA division journal Yes No

Depth of description and critique of the methods and findings: _____

3 – Satisfied	2 – Partially Satisfied	1 - Did not Satisfy
Was able to appropriately discuss the strengths and limitations of the research methods and the findings of the journal article	Was able to appropriately discuss the strengths and limitations of the research methods OR the findings of the journal article	Was not able to appropriately discuss the strengths and limitations of the research methods nor the findings of the journal article