

END OF FUNDING PERIOD REPORT

LAUC Statewide Grants, Research & Professional Development Committee

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TITLE OF PROJECT: Clear expectations and habits of mind: A self-evaluation checklist for student writing

Time Period of Grant: Spring 2017

Amount of Award Received: \$350

Original Abstract as Submitted:

In this short paper we will discuss the development and evaluation of a checklist designed to help undergraduate university students develop information literacy skills and some of the habits of mind necessary for scholarly writing through self-guided practice.

The motivation for the project was a set of common concerns expressed by faculty members across disciplines about the quality of student research papers: Students used inconsistent citation styles, did not adequately cite sources or provide attribution for ideas, and failed to evaluate sources. Some of these issues appeared to be the result of a lack of clear expectations at the institutional and assignment levels. (There are no explicit information literacy requirements in the undergraduate curriculum, and instructions for assignments often do not include information about attribution, evaluation, or style.)

We developed a job aid, in the form of a checklist, to provide students with clear expectations, guidance, and a means to monitor their own performance in academic writing. The checklist was intended to accompany individual writing assignments. It included items related to source type, citations and reference list, and quotes, claims and evidence. Each item was worded with a prompt and guidance for students to evaluate their own writing.

We collected student research papers from two offerings of the same upper-level social science course—one in which students did not have the checklist and one in which they were required to use it—and evaluated the effect of the checklist on student writing with a rubric comprising nine criteria based on national standards for critical thinking and information literacy.

Students who used the checklist tended to score higher than those who did not on five of the nine criteria in the rubric. The largest improvements were in style consistency and attribution of facts to sources. The lowest levels of proficiency overall were in evaluation of the usefulness and limitations of sources. These results suggest that student work may be improved merely with clearer expectations, and that checklists or similar interventions could be sustainable alternatives to library instruction or remediation for certain skills. Deficits in critical thinking, however, may require a more extensive approach.

I. ACCOMPLISHMENTS and EVALUATION

I traveled to U.K. to deliver a mini paper at the LILAC Information Literacy conference. As a delegate, I attended presentations and networked with UK librarians as well as a few Americans, including colleagues from UCLA. Approximately 30 individuals attended the talk.

While in the U.K., I gave an overview of this talk to two individuals from a nonprofit in the arts, including the director of employment and skills. They were using checklists in their work with London youth from low-income backgrounds. They were interested in the assessment component of my talk. Additionally, I've consulted with two librarians from London, who attended the presentation, who are interested in using the checklist in assessment projects at their respective universities.

III. FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The funds were used toward overall travel.

Original budget: \$900 Transportation / Airfare \$400 Hotel <u>\$499.71</u> (£399) Registration \$1799.71	Funds: \$350
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IV. SHARING YOUR PRODUCT/RESULTS

The LILAC 2017 Archive is hosted by IL Group (CILIP Information Literacy Group) on SlideShare

https://www.slideshare.net/infolit_group/clear-expectations-and-habits-of-mind-a-selfevaluation-checklist-for-student-writing-marines-zachmeier