***Report and Recommendations of the Information Literacy & Technology Student Learning Outcome Assessment Discovery Committee***

***Submitted: Dr. Mike Russell, Committee Chair***

***December 19, 2013***

*Washburn University ILT SLO definition*

"Information literacy and technology involves the ability to locate, select, use and evaluate information obtained from appropriate electronic and/or printed resources, including a critical analysis of the information and the credibility of the sources of information. It also involves the ability to use technology to research, organize, present and/or communicate information in meaningful ways. Additionally, information literacy and technology includes skills such as the ability to understand the development of technology and its impact on society, the ability to understand and use existing technologies and information to address real-world issues, and the ability to recognize emerging technological trends and their possible impact on the future."

(http://www.washburn.edu/academics/undergraduate-programs/general-education.html)

Background

The Information Literacy & Technology Student Learning Outcome (ILT SLO) Assessment Discovery Committee was formed and met during the Fall 2013 semester. The committee was chaired by Dr. Mike Russell and composed of the following nine (9) individuals:

- Alan Bearman (History & Mabee Library)
- Regina Cassell (Mass Media)
- Jeanne Catanzaro (School of Nursing)
- Vickie Kelly (Allied Health)
- Mark Peterson (Political Science)
- Bill Roach (School of Business)
- Mike Russell (Psychology)
- Vanessa Steinroetter (English)
- Nan Sun (Computer Information Sciences)

The committee had broad representation from across campus. The committee members were selected based on their knowledge and expertise relating to information literacy and/or technology.

The task of the committee was, by the end of the Fall 2013 semester, to recommend one or more assessment instruments relating to information literacy and/or technology. The committee was informed that the selected instrument would be used to assess the information literacy and technology abilities of exiting students – the end product of a Washburn University education. It was further noted that only a sample of the graduating student body would be assessed. The committee was told that an assessment instrument could take the form of an assignment that could potentially be included in a University requirement course (EN 300) or it could take the form of a standardized test. While the committee was instructed to consider assessments of any format, they were informed that they must recommend an assessment instrument that allows the obtained results to be compared against those of peer institutions and/or possess national norms. This was a mandatory requirement for all recommended assessment instruments. It was also mentioned that it would be preferential if all recommended instruments were high in reliability (i.e., is indifferent to factors that may affect a student's performance) and high in validity (i.e., accurately measures student capability). The committee was informed that they should not attempt to create an assessment instrument. It is likely that innumerable institutions and corporations have already devoted countless hours to creating a reliable and valid assessment instrument. For that reason, it seemed logical that there would be no need to create yet another assessment instrument. In addition, the need to compare the performance of Washburn University students against those of other institutions requires an instrument that is employed by outside institutions.

The committee members were told to consider the following in their selection and recommendation of an assessment instrument:

- The assessment instrument will not be used to evaluate students every semester or every year. Rather, the selected instrument will be used to assess student capabilities approximately every 3rd year.
- It would be advantageous if an assessment instrument required no longer than 50 minutes to complete. This would allow every course to be a viable venue for administering the assessment instrument. Instruments requiring 50 – 75 minutes to complete would also be beneficial.
- Instruments that could be used to assess multiple student learning outcomes (e.g., information literacy and technology as well as critical and creative thinking) would be considered an asset.
- The costs (in terms of money or faculty time) associated with an assessment instrument should not be considered a determining factor in recommending (or not) an assessment instrument.
- It would be acceptable to recommend one (or more) assessment instruments for information literacy and one (or more) additional assessment instruments relating to technology.
- Committee members may wish to consider the issue of whether assignments or standardized tests are better. It can be expected that students will more seriously consider an assignment that is part of a course grade than a standardized test.

Conversely, a standardized instrument would permit objective scoring and may more accurately reflect student capabilities and, thus, may result in a more accurate evaluation of our students.

- When contemplating instruments, committee members were asked to recommend the assessment instrument(s) that best reflects our student population, our institution, and the University's approved ILT SLO definition.

The background of the various committee members tended to be primarily concerned with either information literacy or technology. For that reason, it seemed prudent to partition the committee into two subcommittees. The information literacy subcommittee was composed of the following five (5) individuals:

- Alan Bearman (History & Mabee Library)
- Regina Cassell (Mass Media)
- Mark Peterson (Political Science)
- Mike Russell (Psychology)
- Vanessa Steinroetter (English)

The technology subcommittee was composed of the following five (5) individuals:

- Jeanne Catanzaro (School of Nursing)
- Vickie Kelly (Allied Health)
- Bill Roach (School of Business)
- Mike Russell (Psychology)
- Nan Sun (Computer Information Sciences)

Subcommittee members were informed that they should forward to the entire committee any instrument that assessed the area of interest of the other subcommittee.

Information Literacy Assessment

The Information Literacy Student Learning Outcome Assessment Discovery subcommittee recommended four (4) assessment instruments. Those instruments are:

- Project SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills)
- Information Literacy Test (ILT): James Madison University
- ETS iSkills AACU rubric
- AAC&U Information Literacy VALUE rubric

The committee Chair prepared a comprehensive summary of the information relating to each of the above assessment instruments (e.g., cost, reliability and validity measures,

instrument format). That summary was emailed to the committee members on November 29th, 2013. The committee members were requested to review the summary and then vote (via an online survey) whether each assessment instrument should be adopted by Washburn University. More specifically, participants were requested to select one of the following response options for each assessment instrument: (1) "yes" – the assessment instrument should definitely be considered for adoption, (2) "maybe" – possibly adopt the instrument, or (3) "no" – definitely not adopt the instrument. Subcommittee members were permitted to select "yes" for more than one instrument and were highly encouraged to avoid voting "no" on all instruments.

Faculty preference for a particular assessment instrument was determined in three ways.

1. The total number of "*yes*" votes was calculated. This number is believed to reflect the number of individuals who have a strong preference for a particular assessment instrument.
2. The total number of *favorable ratings* was calculated. Favorable ratings were calculated by summing the number of "yes" and "maybe" votes. The favorable rating is thought to provide a general measure of approval.
3. A *preference score* was calculated for each assessment instrument.

Preference score = ((#yes votes*1) + (#maybe votes*.5) + (#no votes*0))/total # votes

In short, the higher the score, the more favorable a particular assessment instrument was perceived. The range of preference scores is from 0.00 (no support at all) to 1.00 (complete support). A value of 0.50 reflects an instrument that was overall viewed as neither positive nor negative.

The following results are based on the votes of 4 out of 5 subcommittee members. Mark Peterson did not cast any votes.

*Results*

The subcommittee members clearly favored the Project SAILS assessment instrument. The Project SAILS assessment instrument received a total of 4 (100%) "yes" votes, 4 (100%) favorable votes, and a preference score of 1.00.

The 3 remaining instruments (Information Literacy Test, the ETS iSkills, and the AAC&U rubric) received exactly the same responses:

- There were no "yes" votes (0%).
- Each of the assessment instrument received only one "maybe" vote (25%) and three "no" votes (75%).
- All 3 instruments had a preference score of 0.125, clearly revealing a general dislike for those instruments.

RECOMMENDATION: Based on the results, there is overwhelming support for the Project SAILS assessment instrument and it appears it is the only viable instrument for Washburn University. Therefore, it is recommended that the Project SAILS assessment instrument be adopted by Washburn University for assessing the Information Literacy aspect of the ILT SLO.

Technology Assessment

On November 29th, 2013, an email was sent to the Technology SLO assessment discovery subcommittee. The purpose of the email was to convey the fact that the subcommittee seemed unable to discover an instrument that (1) assesses Technology as defined in the SLO, (2) is used by a large number of institutions of higher education, and (3) has a high degree of reliability and validity. Based on the inability to find an acceptable assessment instrument, the Chair made the suggestion that:

a. The VPAA (Vice President of Academic Affairs) be informed that no instrument exists given our parameters (points 1 - 3 mentioned previously).
b. The VPAA also be informed that either the definition of the SLO be altered in such a way that it is more fitting current assessment instruments, or that Technology Literacy be eliminated from that particular SLO.

Each member of the subcommittee was requested to inform the Chair as to whether they "agree" or "disagree" with "a" and "b" (above). The subcommittee members were told that the VPAA would be informed of the entire vote of the committee so that he would be able to make a fully informed decision. Lastly, the subcommittee was requested to inform the Chair of any assessment instruments that may have been overlooked.

*Results*

I received response from 4 of 5 members of the subcommittee (Jeanne Catanzaro had foot surgery and did not participate beyond November 21st).

All 4 (100%) respondents agreed that no assessment instrument was overlooked.

All 4 (100%) respondents agreed that the VPAA should be informed that that no instrument exists given our parameters.

Half (50%) of the respondents agreed that either the Technology portion of the SLO definition be altered so that it better fits current assessment instruments, or that the Technology aspect of the SLO be eliminated. One subcommittee member disagreed and one subcommittee member partially agreed. Both of those individuals stated that technology literacy should not be eliminated from the SLO definition.

RECOMMENDATION:  The Technology portion of the SLO definition be modified such that it better fits current assessment instruments and yet reflects the content being taught within ILT SLO general education courses.