UNLV | ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
Academic Assessment

3-Year Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet
Email to: assessment@unlv.edu

Program Information
Program Assessed:

Department: Educational Initiatives

College: UNLV Libraries

Department Chair: Rosan Mitola

Date Submitted:

Semesters and Year Covered in this Report:

Contact Person for This Plan
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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.

- ***FOR 2022: Did the program assess learning outcomes related to workforce outcomes/career attainment? If so, what was assessed, and what were the findings?***
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.

Process: Please provide a brief narrative of the assessment process for this course. Include a description of the type of student work assessed (e.g., research papers, exams, etc.), the number and roles of people involved in the process, any tools used for the assessment (e.g., checklists, rubrics, etc.), and how student learning was evaluated.

In 2019 we assessed how well students who are completing creative research assignments are able to synthesize multiple sources of information in order to draw a conclusion and credit the work of others. We focused on courses where disciplinary faculty have attended the UNLV Libraries Faculty Institute on Creative Research Assignments and the work they have submitted as a result of those institutes. While many faculty members chose not to submit their student work, we reviewed 21 student artifacts that included interviews, powerpoint presentations, infographics, and websites. We measured these works against a rubric that detailed three criteria for successfully synthesizing information: (1) Using and citing multiple sources, (2) Connecting specific research to individual, community, or global experiences, and (3) Presenting information in logical order. This process included a team of five library faculty and staff members. We used multiple sources to norm our rubric as a group, and then assigned artifacts for group members to individually rate. We built in reviewer overlap for multiple sources in order to ensure the rubric was being applied consistently across group members. We then discussed our ratings as a group, noted trends between the works, and identified recommendations for moving forward.

Results: Please provide a brief summary of the results of your assessment process. Include both what you learned about your students' achievement of the specified learning outcomes and what you learned about the assessment process itself, if applicable.

Students generally did not succeed at effectively synthesizing sources in the creative research assignments. Overall scores ranged from 0-7 on a scale of 9. The highest average category was using and citing multiple sources, and the lowest was putting things in a logical order in order to find a conclusion. Much of the student work did not have a conclusion, which we assume to be due to the assignments not asking students to draw conclusions from their research. While we were interested in information synthesis we believe as a result of this assessment practice that faculty are not asking students to practice this in their creative research work. It may be that when transitioning from a research paper to a creative research assignment, instructors were less concerned about students' ability to synthesize and more focused on how to present the information in the new format.

Conclusions: Please describe how the results of this assessment process might be used to revise instruction in this course and/or refine the assessment process in future years.

We believe that multiple steps will improve students' information synthesis in creative research assignments; instructor education, student education, and transparent assignments.

In future iterations of the UNLV Libraries Faculty Institute on Creative Research Assignments, we plan to add content about how to effectively encourage students to synthesize information in this new format. Synthesis is one of the most challenging components of research, and we believe faculty did not ask students to do so in their creative work. We feel we should add a part about synthesis into the faculty institutes and encourage instructors to remember that this is a research assignment that just happens to be a creative work, but that they should still ask their students to effectively complete the research by synthesizing multiple sources in order to draw a conclusion.

Additionally, student education on synthesis would also improve these skills. One skill in particular we intend to incorporate into student education is data visualization. Data visualization instruction will improve students ability to communicate patterns they have identified in multiple sources. Additionally, showing them good examples of citing and pattern making could help.

This goes hand in hand with our third suggestion: transparent assignments. We found that while you can effectively present all of the required information well in creative research projects, students were not doing so because they likely did not understand it was an important element of the process. We believe if we show students how to successfully achieve this through a rubric they will have a much better understanding of what we are asking of them and will be more likely to succeed.

Finally, in order to improve our assessment initiatives in the future, we will require attendees of the Faculty Institute to submit student work so we can note changes over time and continue our assessment work.

Appendices: Please attach any applicable assignment descriptions, rubrics, results tables, or graphic representations of results.

[Rubric attached here](#)