Information Evaluation
An Assessment of Annotated Bibliographies

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Background

Librarians at NewSchool has been offering one-shot information literacy instruction for many years. Through growing organic interest from faculty, the role has grown and resulted in a need to thoughtfully scaffold IL skills throughout the curriculum. From 2013 to 2015, library instruction sessions focused on information retrieval. As part of the Academic Integrity Initiative, this focus shifted to include information evaluation and using information ethically. By 2016 it became clear that assessment of student learning regarding information evaluation was needed.

Two sections of RSH582 Research and Communication were offered in fall of 2016. Annotated bibliographies were collected to allow an assessment of student ability to apply the CRAAP method. This method considers currency, relevance, accuracy, authority, and purpose.

The Assignment

As a homework assignment, students were required to produce an annotated bibliography of resources identified for their research. The following is adapted from the assignment handout:

- Find a MINIMUM of 10 reliable sources that relate to your topic
- MINIMUM Seven (7) sources must be published journals or books
- MAXIMUM Three (3) sources can be internet/web-based sources
- Create an annotated bibliography/ reference list of your 10 sources correctly in APA format (see purdueowl and/or textbook for proper formatting).
- Create a brief description of each reference and why it is relevant to your research (3-4 sentences)

Deliverables:
Annotated Bibliography/references (2 copies)

Methodology

Student artifacts were collected and assessed using an information evaluation rubric adapted from the AACU VALUE Rubrics by the Librarian and Library Technician. A collaborative norming exercise was completed by library staff, the Director of the Student Success Center, and the Director of Integrative Studies. 31 student artifacts were scored using the rubric, each by two assessors. Where a one-point differential occurred between scores, they were assigned a .5. Where a differential of two or more

occurred they were compared and discussed so both parties reached a mutual agreement. Following the norming process, from 31 artifacts across 5 categories only three required additional discussion.

NSAD Source Evaluation Rubric Course Level

	Transitional (0)	Introduced (1)	BENCHMARK Developed (2)	Highly Developed (3)
(a.) Currency	Does not identify date the source was published or created	Identifies date source was published or created, but does not use this information to determine if source is appropriate for the research project	Identifies date source was published or created and uses appropriately current sources for their specific research project.	Identifies date source was published or created and uses appropriately current sources for their specific research project. Discusses how it is appropriate for their research project and discipline.
(b.) Relevance	Does not state how source is useful to the research project	States source is useful for the research project, but does not provide an explanation why it is relevant (e.g. leads to other sources, contains background info, provides a type of evidence or answers a research question)	States source is useful and provides an basic explanation of why it is relevant	States source is useful and develops a relationship between the source and the research project using specific examples from the source and placing them in the context of the project.
(c.) Accuracy	Does not consider accuracy in sources, includes inaccurate source material (i.e. Wikipedia, google search, etc.)	Considers accuracy in source material, but does not discuss correctness and reliability of information and the source.	Discusses source correctness and reliability and demonstrates some critical analysis of information presented. Does not consider how information in source can be verified.	Discusses source correctness and reliability, including a discussion of quality of information present. Considers how evidence and arguments presented in the source can be verified.
(d.) Authority	Does not identify author, publisher, or organization that created the source.	Identifies author, publisher, or organization that created the source but does not use this information to determine is source is appropriate for the research project	Identifies author, publisher, or organization that created the source and acknowledges that they are appropriate for the research project.	Identifies author, publisher, or organization that created the source, uses this information to determine if the source is appropriate for the research project and connects the author of the source to the research topic.
(e.) Purpose (authors purpose for creating the source)	Does not consider the author's purpose or motives for creating the source.	Discusses author's purpose or motive for creating the source, but does not evaluate how this purpose affects the information in the source.	Discusses author's purpose or motive for creating the source, evaluates and justifies why the source is appropriate for the research topic.	Discusses author's purpose or motive for creating the source, and evaluates how this purpose affects the information in the source. Justifies why the source is credible for the research topic and identifies potential bias of conflict of interest.

Student Learning Outcomes

This assessment focused on Library Learning Outcome number 2:
Library users will be able to critically evaluate information sources considering relevance, reliability, and authority.

Goal

100% of students will score an average of 2 (Developed) across all five categories.

Information Evaluation Rubric Assessment 2016
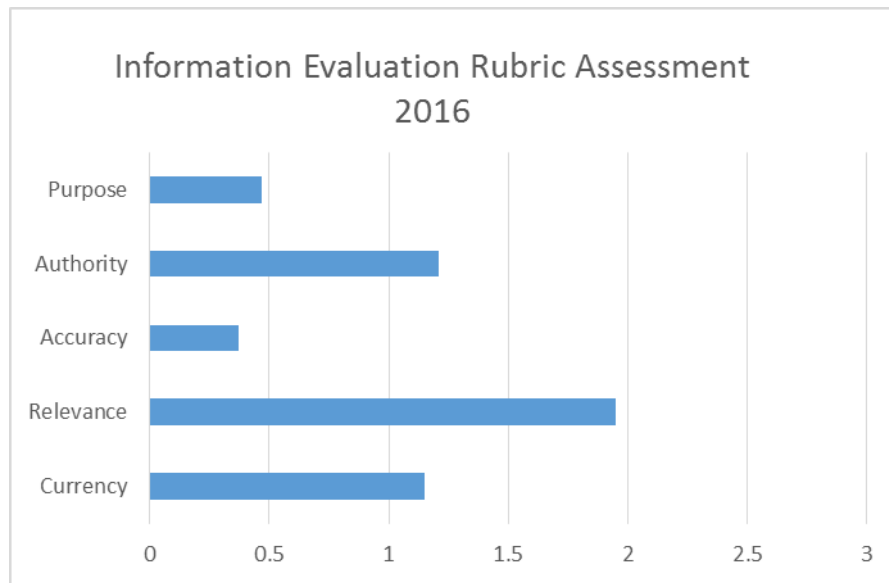
Goal Not Met

Students were unable to achieve the Benchmark score of 2 in any category. Accuracy and Purpose were identified as areas of concern. While relevance, authority, and currency were acknowledged, many students failed to consider these two aspects of information evaluation.

Discussion / Conclusions

- The assignment did not reflect the rubric. Of the five categories evaluated, only relevance was specifically mentioned. Is this therefore the most appropriate assignment in which to assess information evaluation?
- Are syllabi consistent in their learning outcomes?
- Are students specifically introduced to and taught the CRAAP information evaluation methodology? Particularly as it relates to annotated bibliographies

Recommendations
- Embed library instruction into the class and dedicate a session to understanding and using the CRAAP test

Follow Up/ Results

RSH582 was repeated in Spring Term 2017. A cohort of twelve students were taught a one-shot instruction session by librarians that related specifically to using the CRAAP method for information evaluation in Annotated Bibliographies. The class included a 30-minute lecture and a group exercise applying CRAAP to an information source, then presenting their conclusions and recommendations. In the class students were able to apply CRAAP very successfully. Student artifacts were collected and assessed using the same method and norming process followed in fall of 2016 (see above).

Goal

Scores will show an improvement in all five categories, particularly consideration of Accuracy and Purpose.
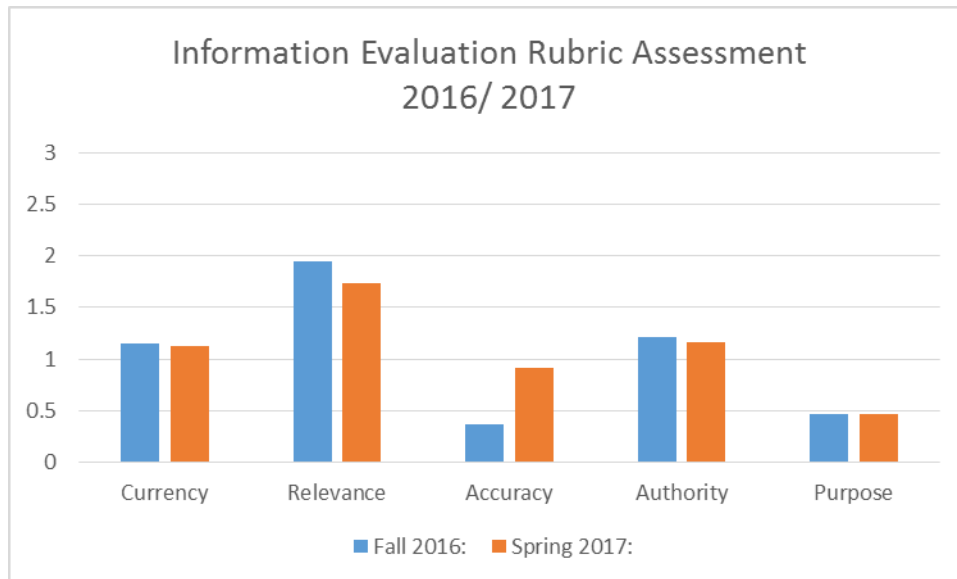
Goal Not Met

There was little change across all categories apart from accuracy, which saw a small increase.

Discussion / Conclusions

- Why were students able to apply CRAAP so successfully in class, but failed to follow through in the formal assignment? Difference between formal graded and informal activities? Difference between presenting findings and articulating them through writing?
- Some issues with the rubric were noted. Sometimes categories were difficult to distinguish between in terms of the skills they were assessing
- Assignment still not reflective of the rubric. Not measuring what we say we are teaching
- Is there some bias amongst assessors, who are now familiar with the process and are being stricter regarding their assessment?
- Should library instruction session be more embedded in the course curriculum so this becomes a Signature Assignment?

Recommendations

- Revisit the rubric and update some aspects
- Meet with all faculty who teach the course to develop a Signature Assignment that speaks to the rubric and demonstrates IL learning

- Embed the Librarian instruction session into the course curriculum

Follow Up/ Results

RSH582 was repeated in Fall Term 2017. A cohort of 26 students were taught a one-shot instruction session by librarians on using the CRAAP method. In addition librarians met with the Instructor to revisit the assignment, clarify expectations, and develop a grading rubric. This was shared with students and included in the assignment handout. The following is adapted from the updated assignment:

- Evaluations of the sources that you will incorporate in your term paper. For this assignment, you will be required to include:
- A minimum of 10 separate sources. At least 7 sources should be from published, peer-reviewed books or journals, and a maximum of 3 sources can be from websites.
- Separate annotations for each source included, and a total of at least ten. Annotations should be roughly 4-6 lines in length, not including the citation.
- Evaluation: Assignment #2 is worth 5% of the final course grade or a maximum of 50 points awarded. For each source and annotation, the following criteria should be met:

Item Description	Points Possible
Relevancy of source for your specific topic is articulated	10
Central arguments of source are evaluated effectively	10
Validity of evidence in source is established	10
Sources are current and date is specified	5
Author or publisher of source is identified	5
Overall purpose and potential biases are established	5
Clarity and tone of overall entry meets academic standards	5
TOTAL	**50**

Student artifacts were collected and assessed using the same method and norming process followed in fall of 2016 and spring of 2017 (see above).

Goal

Scores will show an improvement in all five categories.

Information Evaluation Rubric Assessment 2016/ 2017
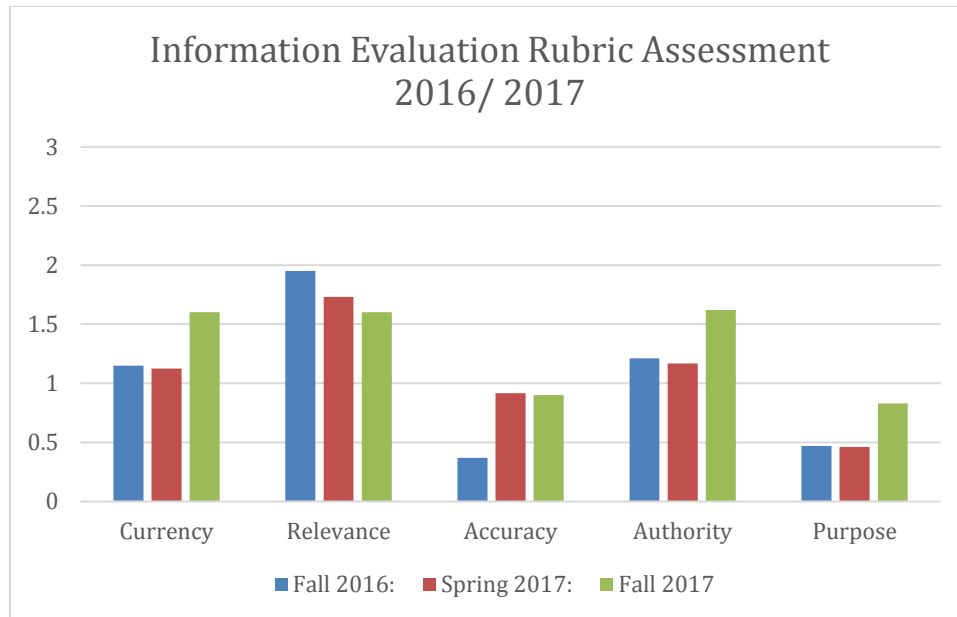
Goal Not Met

Although there was marked improvement in currency, authority, and purpose, there was no change in accuracy and relevance actually fell slightly.

Discussion / Conclusions

- The drop in Relevance might reflect a focus on additional categories
- Overall updating the assignment wording and providing a grading rubric had a more significant impact than the instruction session. Combined these two approaches do show an improvement in student ability.

Recommendations

- Revisit the rubric and update some aspects

Follow Up/ Results

- Library instruction is now embedded in the curriculum. Librarians meet with instructors to share this experience and encourage increased use of grading rubrics and transparency
- Librarians offered an In-Service workshop open to all faculty at NewSchool. This evidence was shared to encourage increased use of grading rubrics and clearer assignments