During fall 2013, I was embedded in PTMA 4990, the Professional Studies Capstone Course. This is an online course offered through the Ft. Campbell campus, and I focused my assessment on one learning outcome:

After reviewing the library resources content and/or consulting with the embedded librarian via the course discussion board [c], a student in PTMA 4990 [a] demonstrates his/her ability to accomplish a specific purpose by formatting all of the sources [d] included in the research paper’s References page in APA style[b].

The papers submitted for the course in spring 2013 exhibited numerous errors in formatting. Considering this is a capstone course and students should be familiar with APA style from other classes, I was surprised by the assessment results. I had considered my discussion of APA style to be just a “refresher” for these students, which is clearly not adequate. Thus, I created and embedded another short video clip focusing solely on formatting and citing sources in APA style (http://youtu.be/NOmhF-MHE3o).

As in the fall 2013 period, for spring, I was a presence in the course D2L shell. Instruction consisted of a short video clip (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEw3mgWUNLE) in which I emphasized the “Professional Studies Research Guide” (http://libguides.apsu.edu/professional) I created that provides an overview of library databases and where to find information on APA style, as well as the APA-specific video described above. I was also available via a “library issues” discussion board and e-mail. There were 13 students enrolled in the course. Throughout the semester, there were 17 postings to and from myself and the students on the discussion board.

The learning outcome was measured based on my review of the References page(s) of the final research papers submitted by students for the course in which they were to identify a current issue affecting organizational leaders / managers and address possible solutions to this particular issue. The students were expected to use a variety of sources including primary, secondary, and tertiary. Of the thirteen students enrolled in the course, twelve of them submitted final papers. In reviewing the References page(s) for those papers, there was only one submitted in which all of the sources were correctly cited in APA style. There were a variety of different issues to be addressed by the other students, including formatting (ex. References not typed in 12-point Times New Roman font) and use of a style guide not designated by the course instructor (most commonly MLA). In an improvement over last semester’s assessment, all but one of the students had their References page arranged alphabetically by the author. I will continue to work with the course instructor to emphasize the importance of students being able to accomplish a specific purpose following a set example in any coursework or any position in the workforce.

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