

Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes:
PRST 5300 - Research Methods (RODP) | Fall 2015

This reports on an assessment of two sections of PRST 5300 – Research Methods taught by the same instructor via RODP course delivery in Fall 2015.

Three outcomes, measured by means of reviewing **18 annotated bibliographies** from the two sections, included:

1. Students[a] will select three dissertations or theses on their subject [d] after viewing a tutorial [c] on searching Dissertations and Theses [b].

Result: Completed by **6%**, attempted by another **6%**, and **88%** did not select/include three dissertations or theses on their subject in their annotated bibliography.

2. Following a review of the *Finding Articles LILT module* [c], students [a] will select six journal articles that are available either electronically or locally [d] to demonstrate their ability to locate items identified through ABI/Inform or other library subject-specific databases [b].

Result: Completed by 72% (13 students)

Note: The Finding Articles module was not available for Fall 2015, but a handout on navigating the library was included, along with the embedded librarian’s contact information.

3. Through correctly citing six journal articles with no more than three errors from ABI/Inform or other library subject-specific databases [d], students [a] will demonstrate using the appropriate style format for journal articles from a database in APA Style [b] after reviewing the Citing Sources LILT module and OWL APA website [c].

Result: Completed by **56%** (10 students) with no major errors. **11%** (2 students) had no errors in the 6 selected/best citations.

- **18%** completed with 5-8 major errors (placement or missing elements) that would not necessarily prevent one from finding the articles.
- **45%** completed with non-APA Style errors, such as citing in MLA style, including “Pg.”, including the number of pages, item out of order, non-italicizing of the journal name
- **23%** completed with 2-6 minor punctuation errors, such as slash in the url instead of a period, missing punctuation or extra spacing

Note: The Citing Sources module was not available for Fall 2015, but information on RefWorks and OWL was included in the course News and Discussion board.

In reviewing the results, a handout including screenshots of, and a link to, a sample dissertation would be helpful as well as explaining the value they provide (layout and references) and expectations (skim, not read cover to cover). It may also have more impact if it seems to be coming from the instructor instead of the librarian. Given that students need to include 12 scholarly journal articles in the their research assignments, and only 72% included at least 6 journal articles, a short handout or PowerPoint on what scholarly journal articles are might be helpful. Lastly, while information and a sample bibliography from RefWorks were included, a quick worksheet or template for common APA formats may help students, particularly struggling students, with the elements of citations. Although this is a graduate course, students may have been out of the classroom for several to many years, and need a refresher.