

Student Learning Outcomes: Introduction of RefWorks to BIOL 4080/4081

Assessment Report | Spring 2014

In the spring of 2014, the participants in one (1) section of BIOL 4080/4081 who attended the library session were accessed.

There were four (4) outcomes assessed for this section.

Website evaluation had one (1) outcome with 100% participation expected.

1. Each group was to evaluate an assigned website and to present their findings to the class. This is a qualitative assessment based on participation and critical thinking skills used to assess each website to determine if and under what circumstances the website could be used.

Result: 100% (all 18 students) enthusiastically participated in all phases of this exercise.

Bibliography generated using RefWorks has three (3) outcomes: for both importing the required resources and generating a bibliography the expectations were 100%; and for editing the generated bibliography to APA 6th standards the expectation was that 60% of the students would be successful.

2. Required to import the following from the library's resources: two (2) evidence-based journal articles from science databases; one (1) book from Austin using WorldCat; and one (1) manually entered resources of their own choosing.

Result: 56% (10 out of 18 students) successfully imported two journal articles from a science database; 11% (2 out of 18 students) successfully imported one journal article; and 33% (6 students) did not import any journal articles.

Result: 100% (18 students) successfully imported a book title from Austin Library catalog using WorldCat.

Result: 67% (12 students out of 18) successfully manually entered a resource; 33% (6 students) did not manually enter a resource.

3. Required to generate a bibliography in APA 6th edition using RefWorks.

Result: 100% (18 out of 18 students) turned in a bibliography before leaving the library session that was generated from RefWorks in APA 6th edition.

4. Required to edit the RefWorks generated bibliography to be accurate using APA 6th edition standards. Expectations included changing the default font to New Times Roman with 12 pt. font; correcting the punctuation and capitalizing proper nouns. During the library session examples of these edits were stressed as essential to produce a correct reference page and multiple examples were demonstrated with student participation.

Results: 78% (14 out of 18 students) selected New Times Roman and 12 pt. font, however one missed the "References" title; 22% (4 out of 18 students) did not change the font from the default.

Results: 6% (1 out of 18 students) edited the bibliography for punctuation; 94% (17 out of 18 students) left citations as generated by RefWorks.

Results: 33.33% (6 out of 18 students) capitalized proper nouns within the citation correctly; 66.67% (12 out of 18 students) did not capitalize proper nouns within the citation.

Most students enjoy the evaluation of the websites activity and frequently express surprise that evaluating public websites is time consuming and sometimes hard work. There is no right or wrong answer to these examples but the groups do need to determine when it would be appropriate to use the website's information. Discussions are often lively both within the groups during the evaluation process and between the (group) presenters and the audience.

This RefWorks session was requested by the professor in hopes of improving the reference pages of their projects. The assessment bibliography was agreed upon and viewed as a good reinforcement of what they should learn during the session. Students were required to hand their bibliography to the professor before leaving the library session and the librarian was to evaluate the results and discuss them with the professor.

Because each student handed in a bibliography, it is apparent that 100% of the students were able to import resources to a RefWorks folder and to generate a bibliography from the folder. Sadly, only one (1) of the students followed the directions and turned in a perfectly edited Reference page. A follow up discussion with the professor was held and future sessions agreed upon.

With only two (2) minor changes, I will reuse this assessment for at least one more semester to determine if the poor results were indicative of this class before making radical changes will be made to the instruction session. The two (2) changes include:

1. I will place more emphasis will be placed on the need for editing the RefWorks APA 6th edition generated bibliography before it is accurate. I will do this by having more examples that utilize students participate.
2. Rather than requiring the students spend time selecting a resource for the manual entry, I will select a book and give each student a photocopy of the title page and title page verso so they have the necessary information to enter.

If the next session has similarly poor outcomes, I would like to make more changes to include having each student put their names on their bibliography and students will understand that the bibliographies will be sent to professor after my assessment; and, I would like to obtain the reference pages from each student's final proposal to assess for accuracy. It is my opinion that students will turn in a better bibliography done during the library session knowing that their professor will also be accessing their work.