

## Student Learning Outcomes: Information Literacy in HIST 2020-American History II

### Assessment Report | Spring 2014

In the spring of 2013, I did an assessment of two (2) sections of [HIST 2020-American History II](#) out of a total of eight research sessions taught for the course for a sampling of twenty-five percent (25%).

The three outcomes, measured by means of reviewing footnotes from **48** primary source and **43** secondary source student essays submitted, from a total of 54 students in the two classes, included:

1. Selecting a primary source from a specific primary source database, *Social and Cultural History: Letters and Diaries Online*.  
**Result:** Completed by **85.2%** (48 students)
2. Correctly identifying citation elements for a primary source in Chicago style, with a goal of eighty percent (80%) correctly citing their source.  
**Result:** **52%** (25 students of 48 who submitted) got **80% or higher correct**.
3. Correctly identifying citation elements for a journal article, preferably from either the *America: History and Life* or *JSTOR* database, in Chicago style, with a goal of eighty percent (80%) correctly citing their source.  
**Result:** **60.5%** (26 students of 43 who submitted) got **80% or higher correct**.

Once again, students who submitted the secondary essay were better able to identify citation elements for a journal article than those who were able to identify citation elements for a primary source from *Social and Cultural History: Letters and Diaries Online*. By collecting the completed primary source essay from D2L again, 85.5% students were able to find and select a primary source (Outcome 1), although this was down 4.7% from 90.2% in 2013. For Outcome 2, this spring 44% were able to correctly cite eight of ten citation elements, compared to 17.6% in Spring 2013. With more time again this spring to find and cite a secondary source, the number of students who got 80% or higher was 60.5% (Outcome 3), versus 47.2% for Spring 2013.

Drilling down and looking at specific primary source citation elements, students from the two classes were able to complete the author information at least a 90% rate and as high as 96%. When it came to the date of the item, students were only able to complete at an average rate of 61.5% while the lowest was 52% and the highest 71%. These two items if completed correctly are sufficient enough to pinpoint the item. Common citing issues included identifying whether an entry was a diary or letter and leaving off the URL of the database (25.5% average). With a single collection, it may not be necessary to include the URL for this exercise.

Looking at specific secondary source citation elements, students from the two classes were able to complete the author information at least an 80% rate and as high as 89%. When it came to the title of the article, students were able to complete at an average rate of 79%. Leaving off the URL of the database was the again most common issue (21% average) in citing the article. Some students copied the citation directly from database citation generator which includes the database name and is equivalent to citing the URL in terms of locating the article.

This spring I redesigned the worksheet to be easier to follow and include an example for a diary entry in addition to the letter entry. In addition to the worksheet, during the class research sessions I modeled a journal article search using a completed sample research log. The students received a blank research log with the worksheet. Possible ideas for improvement include copying a primary source diagram from Diana Hacker's site or creating one from the example on the worksheet. For citing journal articles, perhaps linking to a citation generator, such as Son of Citation Machine which some students might be already be familiar with, or RefWorks, would help students with citing the sources. Future focus might be on defining/ narrowing a topic and selecting search terms to search the subject databases for journal articles. Referring to the rubric or providing a research and citing checklist may also be beneficial.