

**Human Research Protocol
Request for Exemption**

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Proposed Title:
Information Literacy Instruction Assessment and Improvement
through Evidence Based Practice:
A Mixed Method Study of an Information Literacy Course
at California State University, East Bay

Type of Project:
Faculty Research

Start Date: after the approval of this protocol
End Date: May 2009

Diana Wakimoto

Date

Judith Faust, Acting Library Faculty Chair

Date

6.1 Description of Research

Currently the library faculty of CSU East Bay teaches a 2-credit information literacy course, LIBY 1210, to incoming freshman as part of the learning cluster program. This course focuses not only on the skills and content knowledge necessary for the students to become information literate in the 21st century, but also focuses on the social and cultural implications of information. Two of the threshold concepts in the discipline of information literacy are that information is power and that information can have an impact on society. The Six Frames of Information Literacy, a theoretical framework developed by Christine Bruce, Sylvia Edwards and Mandy Lupton of the Queensland University of Technology, specifies different modes of viewing and teaching information literacy. These frames include: content, competency, learning to learn, personal relevancy, social impact, and relational.

While the librarians at CSU East Bay have copious amounts of data relating to the improvement of students content knowledge and competency in information retrieval, searching and locating materials, there has not been a thorough investigation of the social impact or personal relevancy frames of the information literacy program. This study aims to assess the impact of the LIBY 1210 classes in increasing the students' understanding of information and its impact on society as well as students' satisfaction with the information literacy course. The study hopes to explore the following questions:

- Does students' understanding of how information impacts society increase because of this course?
- Are students able to understand that information literacy impacts power relations in society?
- Are students satisfied with the information literacy instruction? How can the information literacy class be improved?
- Do students see personal relevancy in becoming information literate and how this affects their place in society?

The results of this study will be used to improve course materials and teaching strategies to raise students' "buy-in" to the program and their ability to become information literate in a social context.

6.2 Study Participants

Participants in the pre and post tests will be the students in the LIBY 1210 sections that are taught by Diana Wakimoto. These tests do not affect students' grades and are turned in anonymously.

Participants for the focus group interviews will be recruited through the LIBY 1210 sections on a volunteer basis. The first 4-6 students to sign up will be chosen unless one of the volunteers is a minor in which case the next volunteer will be taken. Participation or non-participation in the focus groups has no affect on student grades.

No vulnerable populations will be participants in this study.

6.3 Research Methodology

The first part of this study will consist of pre and post tests of the students' information literacy levels pertaining specifically to the personal relevance and social impact frames of information literacy (see Appendix A). These tests will be anonymous. The pre and post test for this study will consist of the same questions in order to measure the level of increased knowledge and understanding of information literacy in the social impact and personal relevance frames. These tests will be administered in each of the three quarters (Fall 2008, Winter 2009, and Spring 2009) that Diana Wakimoto will teach.

The second part of the study will consist of focus group interviews with 4-6 students in order to solicit more detailed answers to questions about the information literacy program. This part of the study hopes to elucidate: (1) how students think information literacy impacts them and the greater community and (2) how the students believe the information literacy program could be improved. The focus group sessions should last approximate one hour. These sessions will be taped with an audio recorder. There will be one focus group session per quarter, unless there are enough volunteers to warrant 2 focus group sessions in which case there will be 2 sessions. See Appendix B for the focus group questions.

The above methodology will be repeated in the Winter 2009 and Spring 2009 quarters in order to have iterative design to see if the changes made in the course curriculum based on the previous quarter's data has any affect on the following quarter's results.

Analysis of the pre and post tests will consist of comparing the aggregated data for differences and trends in answers given. If possible, the answers will be coded in order to perform content analysis of the answers.

The focus group session data will be transcribed and coded in order to be analyzed for overall trends and repeated themes during content analysis. All analysis will be qualitative.

The data collected from the 3 quarters will be compared to determine any trends and differences in the satisfaction and effectiveness in the teaching of the LIBY 1210 class.

6.4 Benefits

The application of the results of this study will have the immediate benefit of improving the information literacy classes taught by Diana Wakimoto. This will have concrete benefit to our students as they become prepared to be discerning individuals in this information society. The students taking part in this study will benefit from receiving a copy of the results of this study and also from the refreshments provided during the focus group meeting. The participants will not be paid for their participation in this study.

The university will benefit from the application of the results as it will align the information literacy program more closely with the university's mission of preparing students to be "socially responsible contributors to their communities, locally and globally." The university will also benefit from increased recognition in the library and information science field through the planned publication and presentation of the results of this study.

6.5 Possible Risks

There are no known risks for the participation in this study. Each participant in the focus groups will be given a consent form to sign and each participant can withdraw from the study at any time.

6.6 Minimization of Risks

Each participant of the focus group must sign a consent form. These forms, along with the audio records and transcripts, will be kept in a locked file cabinet under strict confidence. In all reports, publications and presentations, participants will remain anonymous. Participants are able to withdraw from this study at any time. No identifying data will be collected in this study. A notice of consent will also appear at the top of the pre/post tests.

6.7 Informed Consent

- ❖ Please see Appendix C for the written consent form for the focus group sessions

6.8 Waiver of Written Consent

- ❖ Not applicable

6.9 Questionnaires

- ❖ Please see Appendix A for the pre/post test. Please see Appendix B for the list of focus group questions

6.10 Signatures

- ❖ Please see cover sheet of this protocol

Appendix A: Pre/Post Test

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers will not be graded. Please DO NOT put your name on this test. Your answers will help me make this class better.

1. What does the phrase “information literacy” mean to you?
2. What do you want to get out of this class? (for Pre-test)
What did you learn from the class that was most relevant for you? (for Post-test)
3. Do you think there is a connection between information and power? Please explain.
4. How do you think being information literate impacts your place in society? Please explain.
5. How do you access and use information in your life? Please explain and/or give an example.
6. How satisfied with the course are you? What could we do to improve the course? (For post-test)

Appendix B: Focus Group Introduction and Questions

Hello and thank you for coming to this focus group meeting. Before we get started, I want to give you an overview of what to expect during this session. The meeting will last one hour during which time we will cover six questions. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. We are trying to make the class better and your answers will help us do that. During our talk, I will record your answers with a tape recorder. I will also take some notes. All of your answers will remain anonymous in all reports of the results from this session. You will receive copies of the final report of the results. Please be considerate and respectful of your fellow classmates by not interrupting when another person is speaking. Let everyone have his/her turn to speak. It is important that you are comfortable during this conversation. Before we get started, does anyone have any questions?

1. What have you learned from this course, LIBY 1210, which you can apply to your life?
2. What parts of the class were most relevant or helpful to you?
3. Can you use what you've learned to help anyone else? How? Your family? Friends? Community?
4. What do you see as the connection between information and power? Information and society? Any examples?
5. How can we improve this class? What worked and what didn't?
6. Can you think of anything else you would like to say about the class?

Appendix C: Written Consent Form for Focus Group Sessions

Dear Study Participant:

I am the public services librarian at California State University East Bay who teaches information literacy courses, including LIBY 1210. I am currently studying ways that we can make the LIBY 1210 classes more relevant and engaging for students. I need your help in this new study on how the LIBY 1210 class can be made better. The results of this study may help librarians here improve the course and will let librarians outside of CSUEB know how they can improve their information literacy classes.

In this study we will try to figure out how to make the LIBY 1210 more relevant to students and how we can better help students understand the concept of information literacy in the context of society. Persons participating in this study can expect to spend approximately 1 hour in a focus group session which is basically a group discussion. Participants will discuss how to make the LIBY 1210 class more relevant and more effective by answering questions. The session will be recorded by a tape recorder so that the discussion can be later analyzed in order to apply the suggestions made during the focus group session to the teaching of LIBY 1210 classes. There is no foreseeable risk or discomfort. Participants' identity and personal information will remain confidential and will be anonymous in all reports of the results of this study. During the focus group session, you will be provided with refreshments. After the study, all participants will be able to receive a copy of the study results.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You may withdraw your participation at any time. Your decision as to whether to participate or not will have no effect on any benefits you now receive or may wish to receive in the future from any agency. For answers to questions pertaining to the research, research participants' rights, or in the event of a research-related injury, you may contact me directly at 510-885-4287 or the Office of the AVP, Research and Sponsored Programs at 510-885-4212.

Sincerely,
Diana Wakimoto
Public Services Librarian

Please indicate your consent to participate by signing one copy of this letter and returning it to me. The other copy is for you to keep.

I have read this letter and consent to participate.

Signature: _____ Date: _____