

Information Literacy Stipend

Final Report

Faculty Member: Rebecca Spirito Dalgin, Associate Professor, Department of Counseling and Human Services

Identified Course and Term: CHS 342 – Foundations of Rehabilitation – Fall 2017

Collaborating Librarian: Donna Witek, Associate Professor, Weinberg Memorial Library

Purpose of the Identified Course: The primary purpose of this course is to introduce to students the profession of Rehabilitation Counseling and the scope of practice across the public, private, and non-profit settings. Students will develop sensitivity and an appreciation and understanding of what it means to be an individual with a disability in this society. Topics will include the principles of rehabilitation, concepts of independent living, supported employment, and transition, as well as an introduction to the state/federal Vocational Rehabilitation system.

The Assignment: The assignment chosen for redesign is called the Rehabilitation Resource Report. The goal for the assignment is to have students experience the link between research/theory and human service practice by better understanding community rehabilitation services and the relationship between those services and rehabilitation literature. Students are asked to select a community rehabilitation program from the local community that provides services to individuals with disabilities. They then need to search the rehabilitation literature to find out about theoretical and practice approaches that are considered ‘evidence based practices’ that are in line with the services being provided by the community program they chose. Finally, they go for a site visit/interview of the community program and then write about the similarities and differences they found between what is being reported in the literature and what is happening in real world application in Northeast Pennsylvania.

Identified Student Learning Outcomes:

The associated course student learning objectives include:

1. Students will be able to identify the philosophy and principals of the field of rehabilitation.
2. Students will be able to identify the types of settings and roles Rehabilitation Professionals function in while assisting individuals with disabilities.
3. Students will be able to identify various rehabilitation services including independent living, vocational rehabilitation and supported employment, transition, in-patient rehabilitation, adjustment counseling, case management, substance abuse treatment, psychiatric rehabilitation, residential and day programing, etc.

In addition, in collaboration with Donna, we developed student learning outcomes related to information literacy that the redesigned Rehabilitation Resource Report assignment directly assesses. These outcomes were designed to map to both the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education and the Weinberg Memorial Library's Information Literacy Program Student Learning Outcomes.

The Intervention: The process and assessment of this assignment were redesigned. Originally, students were given basic instructions on a handout and then the final paper was graded with a basic rubric. However, through collaboration, Donna and I created a more structured approach to the assignment. We decided to scaffold the steps required to complete the project. First, the students met with Donna for an entire class session. She tailored the lesson to help students better understand 'peer reviewed articles', and how to conduct an academic literature review via available databases. Additionally, she developed 2 worksheets to assist students with identifying relevant articles, summarizing and preparing the citations for the articles, and development of relevant questions for their site visits. These worksheets were introduced at the library lesson and then completed and submitted via D2L dropbox at different intervals during the semester. The students then visited a community program or organization with questions related to 3 different rehabilitation research studies they found in the literature. Finally, they wrote a comprehensive paper describing how the theoretical literature relates to the services being provided by the actual community program they visited and presented the information orally to the class. Each element was graded and students were provided feedback by the instructor to assist them with each step in the project.

A reflection component was incorporated at the end of the course to reinforce metacognitively the students' learning related to the information literacy concepts drawn from the ACRL Framework, specifically 1.) information has value, 2.) research as inquiry, 3.) scholarship as conversation, and 4.) searching as a strategic exploration. Additionally, by the end of the assignment, each of these concepts were connected directly to the field of practice of Rehabilitation Counseling for the students.

Results:

Overall, from a faculty point of view, the assignment was much more successful in meeting the stated learning objectives than in the past. The final papers showed significantly more consistency with the relevance of the chosen rehabilitation literature and the quality of the final written product. Students wrote about the connection of the literature to the local rehabilitation provider services in a much more informed way. Additionally, the use of the 2 worksheets and scaffolded time line increased student/faculty interactions about the literature and matching to a relevant provider.

The following specific outcomes were identified and mapped to the relevant information literacy concept:

Project Outcome	Information Literacy Concept
Students were instructed on database usage, information literacy, and report construction.	Research as inquiry Searching as a strategic exploration
Students increased knowledge of and ability to utilize rehabilitation literature.	Research as inquiry Scholarship as conversation Searching as a strategic exploration
Students increased their ability to understand rehabilitation interventions and theory and the ways it informs real world application.	Information has value
Students increased their confidence in contacting rehabilitation service providers.	Information has value Scholarship as conversation
Students increased their ability to communicate with rehabilitation providers about evidence based practices from the literature.	Scholarship as conversation
Students increased knowledge about the wide variety of rehabilitation services.	Information has value
Students completed the project in logical stages along an appropriate timeline.	Research as inquiry

Future Steps:

Donna and I are in the process of evaluating each step of the project to identify areas for revision for next fall. However, current plans are to continue to incorporate the library instruction class, and 2 preparation worksheets to maintain the scaffolded steps for the project, and to look for ways to increase our ability to assess our desired outcomes.