

Assessing the Information Literacy Skills, Behaviors, and Perceptions of Minoritized Students vs. Non-Minoritized Students

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INTRODUCTION

This white paper is being prepared for inclusion in a research brief on Advancing Racial Equity and Accelerating Student Success, compiled by the Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler Cross-Cultural Equity Institute at Palm Beach State College. The digital divide is still a viable concern in our community, and minoritized populations are more vulnerable to being negatively affected by it. Therefore, this white paper proposes assessing the information literacy skills, behaviors, and perceptions of minoritized students versus non-minoritized students to determine if information literacy-based interventions should be offered.

CONSIDERATIONS

In their 2018 literature review, Tichavanda and Tierney noted first and second levels of the digital divide; the first concerned access to technologies, and the second concerned usage and purpose. Looking at one without the other could give researchers an incomplete picture on an individual's connection to and comfort level with digital and information literacy. Thus, the ideal assessment for this research would include sections on information literacy skills, behaviors, and perceptions.

RESEARCHING ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment tool will be central to this study, thus warranting a good deal of attention and effort. Several assessment tools were identified for possible inclusion or modeling for this project. In order to compare them, the researcher identified seven qualities that would be found in an ideal assessment. It was not always possible to see a full model of an assessment, but the researcher looked at samples, read case studies of application, and, in some cases, contacted other professionals who had utilized the assessment. The chart in the center shows which criteria was met by the considered assessment tools.

Comparison of Assessment Tools

	SAILS	PILS	IC3	RRSA	UMBC
1. Appropriate for projected student cohort	✓		✓	✓	
2. Connects to PBSC Information Literacy Standards	✓	✓		✓	✓
3. Connects to ACRL Information Literacy Standards, Guidelines, or Frameworks	✓	✓		✓	✓
4. Available for use and customization	✓		✓		
5. Includes sufficient questions on Information Literacy Skills	✓			✓	✓
6. Includes sufficient questions on Information Literacy Behaviors		✓		✓	
7. Includes sufficient questions on Information Literacy Perceptions		✓			✓

SAILS: Standard Assessment of Information Literacy Skills

PILS: Perceptions of Information Literacy Skills

IC3: Internet and Computing Core Certification

RRSA: Research Readiness Self-Assessment

UMBC: Univ. of Maryland, Baltimore County Information Literacy Survey

RECOMMENDATIONS

After a literature review and close consideration of several information literacy assessment tools, this researcher would like to recommend a mixed-methodological approach for the study. SAILS would be an excellent choice for assessing specific information literacy skills as it meets most of the identified criteria that was outlined. As well, SAILS is nationally recognized, and Palm Beach State College has utilized this assessment in the recent past.

Information literacy behaviors and perceptions could be measured through a survey designed by Palm Beach State College. The PILS, RRSA, and UMBC Information Literacy Survey are excellent models and their designers have written detailed pieces on how the assessments were developed. Palm Beach State College's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness would be consulted to ensure the survey would be reliable.

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