

Assessing post-graduate students' readiness for the module: lessons from the University of Fort Hare, South Africa

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Outline

- Introduction and background
- Problem statement
- Objectives of the study
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- Recommendations & Conclusions

Background information about the Honours programme (480 credits)

This article emanates from one of the assignments that was given to the students who were registered for the Honours programme in 2018 (**NQF Level Eight**). They were **12 registered students**.

In this programme students are expected to do four modules and a mini-dissertation of about 20000 words (**UFH Prospectus, 2018**)

Background information about the Honours programme (480 credits)

Module	Credit	Option
Research project (LIS 501)		Mandatory
Research Methods in Librarianship	26	Mandatory
Children & Young Adult Literature (LIS502)	26	Optional/Elective
Management Studies (LIS507)	26	Optional/Elective
Literacy Studies (LIS508)	26	Optional/Elective

Introduction and Background

Name: Children and Young Adult Literature (26 credits)

Purpose: To understand the influence of mass media on children and young people (UFH Prospectus, 2018)

Content: The module focuses on developments in media publishing for children and explores the influence which mass media had upon children's book publishing and library services to young people; provides an insight into present day trends in publishing of fiction for the young adult; the range of promotional services provided to the young by public and school libraries (UFH Prospectus, 2018)

Assessment: Class presentation, individual assignments

Criterion-referencing assessment approach

- Read the article entitled “*Results from the young children, new media, and library survey: what did we learn?*” by Mills, Romeljin-Stout, Campbell and Koester (2015) Then identify a public library that you can visit to do research in order to be able to contextualize library services in line with the given statements:
 - i. The influence of mass media on library services to children and young people
 - ii. The influence of mass media on children and young people’s learning opportunities

Background information about the article

- The article explains that in this 21st century, about 75% of children are growing up in the midst of new technologies, including mobile technologies. Given that, the youth services landscape in libraries is changing. Librarians can use their expertise to evaluate media to help youth and families make their own informed media use decisions. The library community can provide informal learning environment that help children from various socio-economic backgrounds, improve their digital literacy skills at a very young age. However, not all libraries are enjoying access to new technologies as it depends on affordability. Further the article explains how two librarians in Colorado Public Library, designed and implemented a research study in which they used iPads to create digital storytimes for preschoolers. They carefully chose applications and designed hybrid experiences that included both traditional and digital pieces. Then they asked participants to fill in a survey about their preference. They were surprised and pleased to discover that the parents and children preferred the digital storytimes (**Mills et al., 2015**)

What is assessment?

- It is a process used to identify, gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competencies in a qualification, part-time qualification or professional designation in order to make a judgement about a learner's achievement. Assessment can be formal, non-formal or informal. Furthermore assessment can be of learning already done, or towards learning to inform and shape teaching and learning still to be done **(SAQA, 2015)**
- It is the heart of student learning, the barometer of an educational system and the quality of teaching it provides **(Luckett & Sutherland, 2000)**

Why assessment?

- To diagnose a student's strengths and weaknesses (**Diagnostic**)
- To provide feedback and motivate for improved learning (**Formative**)
- To provide judgement on student's learning (**Summative**)

What to assess?

- Competencies such as:
 - Self-reflexivity
 - Self-confrontation
 - Creativity
 - Adaptability
 - Teamwork
 - Systematic-thinking
- Knowledge and skills (Learning outcomes)

How to assess?

- Various approaches can be used such as:
- The traditional approach
- Computer-based assessment
- Workplace/community-based/learnership
- Integrated
- Group-based
- Peer-assessment
- Self-assessment

Problem statement

Lwehabura (2018) indicates that information searching and retrieval skills is a challenging task for university students in Africa because their ability to do so is hampered by lack of skills in various aspects including identifying concepts, reading citations, a lack of knowledge of the structure and contents of library catalogues and of controlled vocabulary and deficient search strategies. **Reboussin (2011)** as cited in **Lwehabura (2018)** recommends that students in Africa should be educated in information literacy or library research methods in order to make them capable of meeting the challenges of the multifaceted information environment of the 21st century. IL is a necessary skill that is useful in every aspect of life, especially in the 21st century where we are inundated with vast amounts of information (**Fourie & Krauss, 2010**)

Problem statement

Using essay-type question and peer- assessment approach, this study strove to gain insight about the students' IL competencies in line with Bloom's taxonomy skills and NQF level 8. In addition, there is a concern that in this 21st century, academics and educators need to be innovative in their assessment as the conventional methods of 3 hour essay type questions cannot be justified (**Luckett & Sutherland, 2000**). To eliminate biasness for this study, peer-assessment was incorporated.

Objective of the study

Gaining insight about the ability of students to comprehend, analyse, apply, synthesize and evaluate the given topic in line with Colvin-Keene Model that uses Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning Objectives and NQF level 8 learning outcome competencies.

Research methodology

Systematic literature review was used to gain insight about the topic at hand (**Marta Zorzini, Hendry, Huq & Stevenson, 2013**).

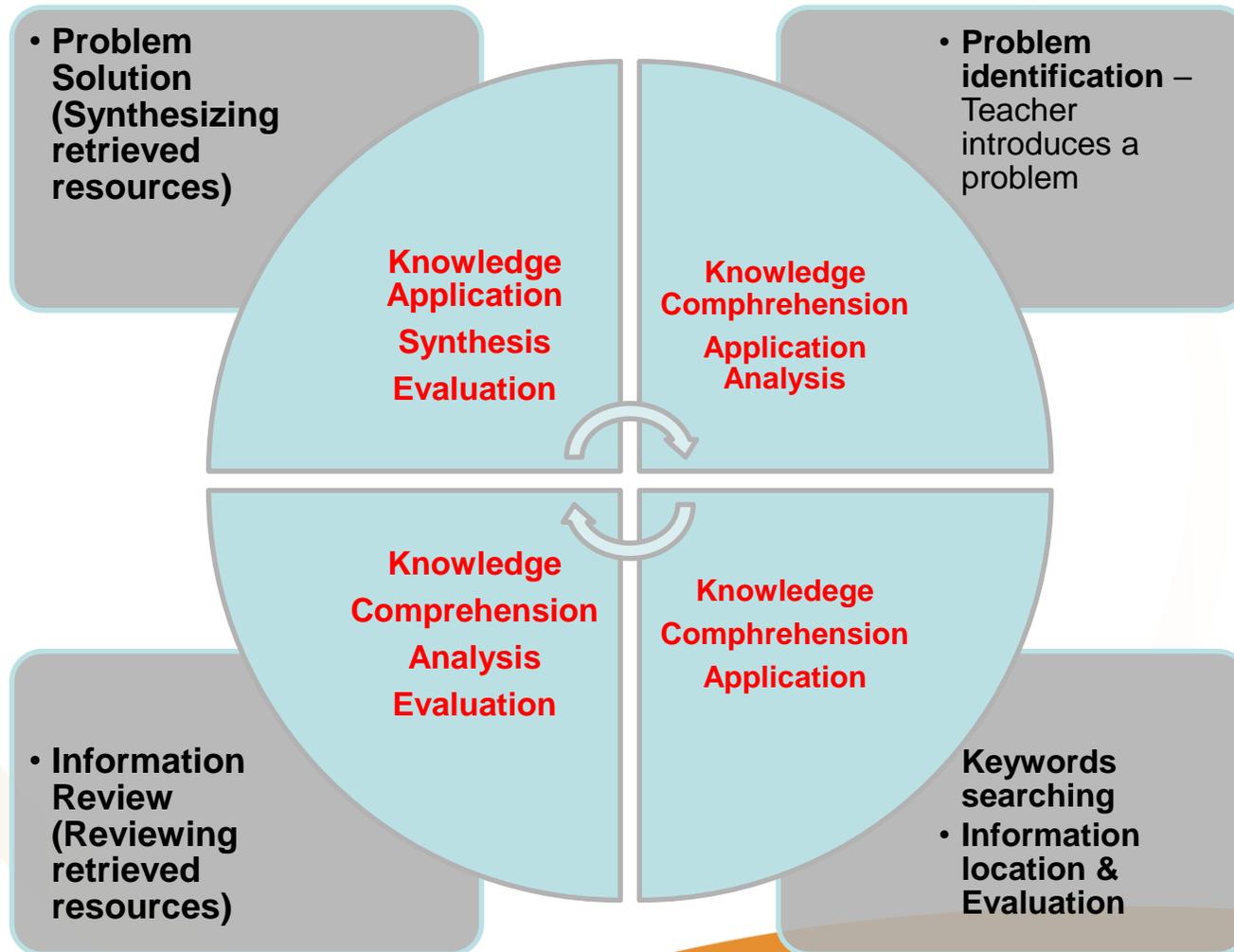
Qualitative document analysis was used. This is a procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic documents. It helped in examining and interpreting data, to elicit meaning, gain insight and develop empirical knowledge (**Bowen, 2009**). Students' written assignments were examined to elicit meaning in line with the topic given. To triangulate data, class presentations and peer assessment scores were used (**Bowen, 2009**).

Theoretical framework

Models that guided this study include:

- Criterion-referenced assessment theory
- Colvin-Keene Model that uses Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Learning Objectives
- NQF Level 8 Descriptors (SAQA

Colvin-Keene Model (Keene, Colvin & Sissons, 2010)



Criterion-referenced or outcomes-based assessment tool

Written essay-type assignment (Teacher-oriented assessment)	
Cover Page	2
Contents page	3
Introduction & definition of key concepts	5
Synthesis of facts & discussion of existing library projects	12
Recommendations & Conclusion	5
References	3
TOTAL	30

Essay-type question response (Keywords, information location & evaluation)

According to Spitulnik (1993:25) mass media refers to communication devices which can be used to communicate and interact with a large number of audiences in different languages. Be it the television, radio or the internet based social networks that are used for the purpose of communication, one thing that has been acknowledged by many scholars is that mass media is an inseparable part of our everyday lives. There are several types of mass media as seen by (Toit & Mulatiningsih, 2013). Firstly, it is print media which includes printed material such as newspapers and magazines. Secondly we have electronic media which includes all the electronic devices of communication. These include television and radio. The radio is also known as broadcast media. Lastly, we have what (Nijboer & Hammelburg, 2010) called the new age media. Unlike the electronic media, this kind of media emerged during the development of the internet. It is highly technological in nature, it's faster than the old school traditional media but also widespread. These include mobile phones, computers and the internet has opened up a wide range of inventions of applications for communication and entertainment

Essay-type question response (Information review & synthesis)

- **Mass media and its influences in the context of South African libraries**
- There is a clear indication from the article that children in USA are exposed to technology from a very young age and it forms part of their informal education and initial interaction with the outside world. However, the library which I visited is a bit different... It is situated in the previously white English speaking community in Port Elizabeth. The community makes use of the library services to its maximum capacity. It is situated next to 4 primary schools and one high school. Consequently the majority of its users are young people and school children. The children's librarian when asked about the use of mass media and technology such as iPads in her section, she was a bit taken aback. Her response was: "the library makes use of desktop computers for access to the internet and has no form of mobile technology devices such as phones and iPads". She carries out the story telling the old fashioned way, of reading a book to the children. She said it is the most enjoyable part of her job. I watched as she read to the group of grades 1-3 children from the nearby schools after school. The children were so glued and listened attentively to her

Recommendations and Conclusions (Problem solution)

Even though librarians in this digital age are responsible for a wide variety of resources and services that expand far beyond the typical eight-hour work day, Igun (2010:18) states that librarians' role in the global information environment is unique. Their roles are critical for the necessary control of information resources in physical and virtual domains.

Librarians have a challenge of making themselves more relevant in this digital era. Iwhiwhu, Ruteyan and Eghwubane (2010) note that the challenge of most librarians is to attract users to the library and to retain them. To deal with this challenge, librarians are consolidating, reshaping, re-designing and re-packaging resources as a means of promoting their services and information. With these challenges such as the children's librarian I visited, it is vital that we promote and advocate for use of new media in our libraries and call upon government, business community and civil society to invest in libraries in terms of buying and donating technological devices that can be used by public libraries. There is a great need for partnerships and collaborations within the library community to work together to provide information access to the people of South Africa.

Peer-assessment rubric (Adapted according to Northcliffe, 2012)

Classroom Presentation		
Introduction of team members; topic & explanation of key concepts	Speaking audible; Eye contact; Body posture; Adherence to time	5/4
Structure & connection of facts & discussion of existing projects	Analytical & reasoning skills; clarity of presentation;	10/8
Recommendations & conclusion	Reflection & lessons learnt	5/4
What was good about the presentation?	The presenter was clear. He managed to define mass media and its influence to children	
What can be improved?	The presenter must narrow the contents and try to be specific. He must stick to children influenced by mass media and not people in general	
TOTAL		20

Recommendations and Conclusions

Patterns of reporting indicated that students had background knowledge on how to structure their assignment subtopics . The majority of assignments showed coherence of facts, good analytical skills. One even narrated the informal interview he/she had with the Children's Librarian as indicated in

Generally, students showed an acceptable level of competencies in line with the Colvin-Keene Model, Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive learning objectives and the NQF level 8 learning outcome requirements. However, it was notable that two students showed poor sentence construction, but relayed good ideas. It is important to build on the already existing information and knowledge management competencies. In addition, to encourage students continue to use IL support systems provided by the university.

Thank you

Define tomorrow.

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