

BCOR 310 Assessment Report 2015-2016



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Background

This report describes the results from the third year of assessment of the research artifact from BCOR 310. The assessment outcomes are those prescribed for BCOR 310 (Outcomes 1.1 (A, B, and C), 1.2 (A and B) and 1.3 (A and B)), which are found in the QEP document approved by SACSCOC.

From a set of 604 students, 571 papers were collected (94.5%) from the 12 sections of BCOR taught in the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters. A random sample of 60 papers from those 571 papers was assessed after the spring 2016 semester (10.5%).

The assessment team consisted of 5 faculty members— Dr. Sarah Lee (Chemistry and Biochemistry), Dr. Suanna Davis (Language and Literature), Dr. Curt Niccum (Bible, Missions and Ministry), Dr. Lynette Austin (Communication Sciences and Disorders), and Dr. Monty Lynn (Management Sciences).

Two members of the assessment team rated each paper in the following categories: exemplary (which has a numerical score of 4), competent (numerical score of 3), emerging (numerical score of 2), or unacceptable (numerical score of 1). The scores from rater 1 and rater 2 were averaged for each paper in the sample. These scores were used to calculate the average score for each SLO objective, the number of papers meeting the acceptable and ideal targets for each SLO objective, and the composite score for each SLO. Composite scores were calculated by adding the rubric scores for each SLO (e.g., 1.1.A + 1.1.B + 1.1.C = 1.1 composite). Percentages of papers rated at or above a certain target (for example, at or above an average of 2.5) were calculated by dividing the appropriate score by the number of papers in the sample.

SLOs assessed (2015-2016):

- 1.1.A Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.
- 1.1.B Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently.
- 1.1.C Students will use information ethically and legally.
- 1.2.A Students will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case, problem or situation.
- 1.2.B Students will apply interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.
- 1.3.A Students will evaluate information and its sources critically.
- 1.3.B Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

Results

SLO Objective 1.1.A--Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed.

ONE	Obj. 1.1.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Determine Information Needed	Score \geq 2.5	36.7%	65.9%	61.7%
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.18	2.55	2.48

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the 2015-2016 school year, 61.7% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; thus **falling short of the acceptable target** for this SLO objective. However, there is a slight drop from the scores reported for Year 4 (2014-2015) assessment, during which 65.9% of papers scored at or above a 2.5 on this objective.

SLO Objective 1.1.B--Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently.

TWO	Obj. 1.1.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Access and Use Information	Score \geq 2.5	43.3%	68.2%	58.3%
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.05	2.58	2.48

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In Year 5, 58.3% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher. Therefore, the sampled papers **fell short of the acceptable target** of 73%. Despite falling short of the acceptable target, there is an encouraging increase in the percentage of papers with a score of 2.5 or above in comparison to the Year 3 (2013-2014) data. Similar to Objective 1.1A, the Year 5 data fell short of the results for Year 4. This trend is more noticeable in Objective 1.1B than 1.1A.

SLO Objective 1.1.C--Students will use information ethically and legally.

THREE	Obj. 1.1.C	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Information Use Strategies	Score \geq 2.5	55.0%	69.7%	87.5%
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Approaching	Exceeded
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Exceeded
		Average of all samples	2.42	2.51	2.76

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this rubric item. In the Year 5 assessment, 87.5% of sampled papers received a rubric rating of 2.5 or higher; **exceeding both the acceptable and ideal targets**. Year 5 is the first year that scores exceeded the ideal target in any rubric item.

SLO 1.1 Composite---Objective 1.1A + 1.1B + 1.1C

COMPOSITE SLO 1.1	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Total \geq 7.5	37.0%	56.1%	58.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Average of all samples	2.22	2.55	2.58

SLO 1.1 calls for students to understand and appropriately use scholarly sources. The SLO is broken down into 3 objectives, 1.1A, 1.1B, and 1.1C, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score of 7.5 for SLO 1.1. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 7.5 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples meeting this score. In Year 5, 58.3% of sampled papers received a composite score of 7.5 or higher. While this falls short of the acceptable target, this composite **score has increased each assessment year**, and shows a considerable increase from the first year of assessment (Year 3).

SLO Objective 1.2.A-- Students will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case, problem or situation.

FOUR	Obj. 1.2.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016	
	Describe Relevant Theories	Score \geq 2.5		51.7%	53%	46.7%
		Acceptable Target (73%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		2.28	2.30	2.23

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In the 2015-2016 school year, 46.7% of sampled papers received a rubric score of 2.5 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target** of 73%.

SLO Objective 1.2.B-- Students will apply interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.

FIVE	Obj. 1.2.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016	
	Analysis Applied to Situation	Score \geq 2.5		51.7%	51.5%	65%
		Acceptable Target (73%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)		Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples		2.34	2.30	2.33

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher. In Year 5 of assessment, 65% of sampled papers received a rubric score of 2.5 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target** of 73%. While the target was not met, we did observe a substantial increase in papers scoring \geq 2.5 compared to Year 3 and Year 4.

SLO 1.2 Composite--Objective 1.2A + 1.2B

COMPOSITE SLO 1.2	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Total \geq 5.0	45.0%	42.4%	48.3%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Average of all samples	2.31	2.30	2.28

SLO 1.2 calls for students to integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers. The SLO is broken down into 2 objectives, 1.2A and 1.2B, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLO 1.2. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In Year 5, 48.3% of sampled papers received a composite score of 5.0 or higher. While the **acceptable target was not met**, we did observe a greater percentage of papers reaching a composite score of 5.0 or above this year compared to the last two years of assessment.

SLO Objective 1.3.A-- Students will evaluate information and its sources critically.

SIX	Obj. 1.3.A	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Evaluate Information	Score ≥ 2.5	52.0%	56.1%	50.8%
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.25	2.33	2.23

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this objective. In the 2015-2016 assessment year, 50.8% of sampled papers received a rubric score of 2.5 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target**.

SLO Objective 1.3.B--Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

SEVEN	Obj. 1.3.B	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Use Information for a Purpose	Score ≥ 2.5	55.0%	62.1%	61.7%
		Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
		Average of all samples	2.70	2.49	2.40

The QEP report calls for an acceptable target of 73% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher and an ideal target of 85% of samples scoring 2.5 or higher for this objective. In Year 5 of assessment, 61.7% of sampled papers received a rubric score of 2.5 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target** of 73%.

SLO 1.3 Composite-- Objective 1.3A + 1.3B

COMPOSITE SLO 1.3	BCOR310	Year 3: 2013-2014	Year 4: 2014-2015	Year 5: 2015-2016
	Total ≥ 5.0	45.0%	51.5%	40%
	Acceptable Target (73%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Ideal Target (85%)	Not met	Not met	Not met
	Average of all samples	2.47	2.41	2.31

SLO 1.3 calls for students to analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research informed decisions. The SLO is broken down into 2 objectives, 1.3A and 1.3B, as described above. The QEP report calls for a composite score for 5.0 for SLO 1.3. The acceptable target is 73% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher, while the ideal target is 85% of samples scoring 5.0 or higher. In the 2015-2016 assessment, only 40% of sampled papers received a composite score of 5.0 or higher, **not meeting the acceptable target.**

Overall Findings

Overall, the assessment team noted the papers reviewed in the 2015-2016 assessment (Year 5) were similar in quality to the 2014-2015 papers (Year 4). Areas of increase or decrease are described below for each rubric item.

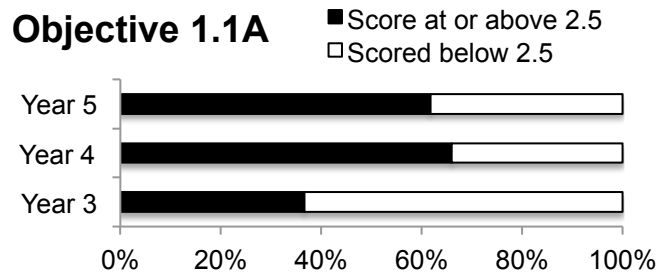
SLO 1.1 Students will understand and appropriately use scholarly sources

- 1.1.A Students will determine the nature and extent of the information needed
- 1.1.B Students will access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- 1.1.C Students will use information ethically and legally

SLO 1.1 calls for students to understand and appropriately use scholarly sources. The SLO is broken down into 3 objectives, 1.1A, 1.1B, and 1.1C.

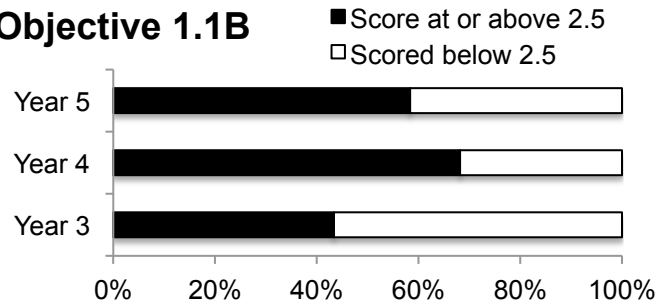
This year we noted small decreases in the scores for Objectives 1.1A and 1.1B compared to last year. Despite a dip, the Year 5 papers still scored well above the Year 3 papers in Objectives 1.1A and 1.1B.

In Year 5, 61.7% of papers scored 2.5 or greater on 1.1A, while only 36.7% of papers reached this goal in Year 3. **Objective 1.1A** addresses how well students develop a research question or topic. Since beginning assessment of the BCOR research paper in Year 3, the team has seen a **dramatic increase in the number of papers with developed research questions.** We applaud the teaching team for making great strides in their focus on a research question. We noticed that all 4 prompts addressed developing a research question, some in more detail than others.



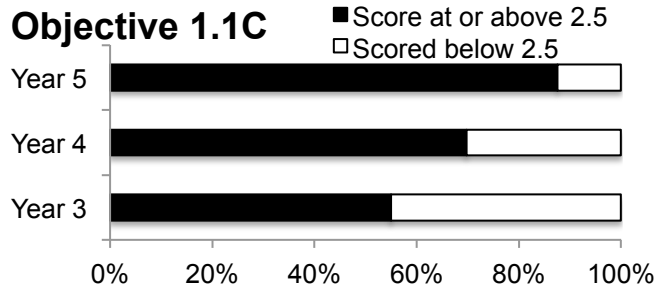
Scores in Objective 1.1B are also greatly improved from Year 3. **Objective 1.1B** addresses the number of quality sources. Compared to Year 4, the percentage of papers scoring a 2.5 or greater dropped by nearly 10 percent. It should be noted that this year some changes were made to this rubric item. The wording now specifies the number of citations that should come from scholarly or academic sources. In previous years, this rubric item did not include these specifics, so the assessment team could have interpreted it more loosely. Despite a drop in scores this year, since Year 3 there has been a large improvement in this rubric item. Overall, the number of papers scoring 2.5 or greater has increased from 43.3% to 58.3% from Year 3 to Year 5.

Objective 1.1B



This year the rubric item with the **greatest improvement** was **Objective 1.1C**. This was the **only rubric item to exceed the ideal target**, with 87.5% of papers scoring a 2.5 or greater. This objective is comprised of two parts, 1.1C-1 and 1.1C-2. 1.1C-1 deals with proper format of in-text citations and the reference list. This year, all BCOR professors asked students to write their papers in MLA format. The assessment team noted and applauds the professors of the 12 sections for requiring a consistent format. 1.1C-2 deals with how students utilize information from references. Compared to previous years, the assessment noted fewer papers that relied too heavily on quotes, and very few papers included references that were not relevant to the topic. We noticed on the prompts that some sections are required to submit a citation list before writing the research paper. We believe this requirement likely contributed to the great increase we have seen in this objective and we applaud the BCOR professors for their work in this area.

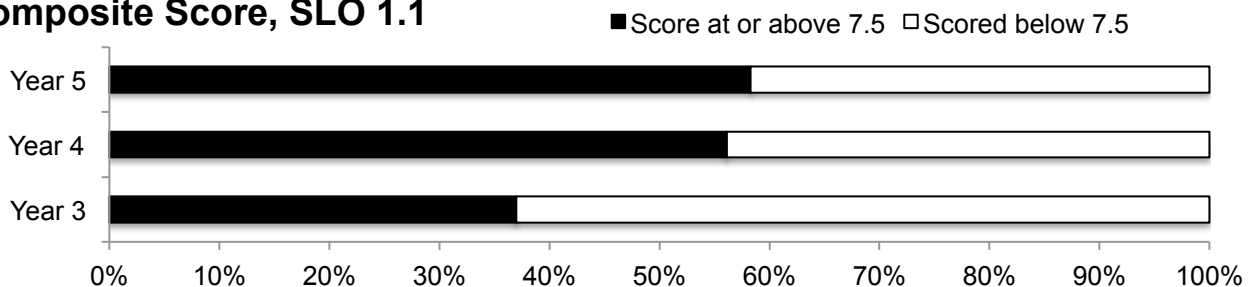
Objective 1.1C



Scores on Objective 1.1C have steadily improved. In Year 3, only 55% of papers scored 2.5 or greater on this rubric item. In Year 4, this percentage increased to 69.7%, and in Year 5 an impressive 87.5% of papers scored at or above this level.

Together, SLO 1.1 calls for students to understand and appropriately use scholarly sources. The composite score for SLO 1.1 takes Objective 1.1A, 1.1B and 1.1C into account. The composite score for this SLO has increased steadily from Year 3 to Year 5. The assessment team has noted the most improvement in this SLO.

Composite Score, SLO 1.1

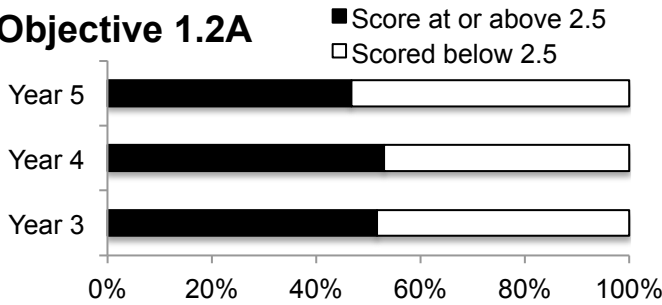


SLO 1.2 Students will integrate knowledge to frame researchable questions and to develop strategies to seek answers

1.2.A Student will describe theories or perspectives relevant to a particular case, problem or situation.

1.2.B Students will apply interpretations relevant to a particular case or problem.

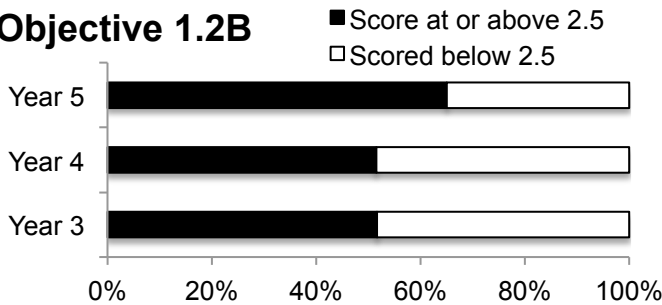
Objective 1.2A



We observed a small decrease from Year 4 to Year 5 in **Objective 1.2A**. In Year 4, 53% of papers scored 2.5 or greater on this rubric item, but in Year 5, only 46.7% of papers reached this goal. To score competently on this rubric item (competent= 3), students must identify and describe theories or perspectives relevant to their thesis. For an exemplary score (exemplary= 4), students must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each described

theory. This year, the assessment team gave zero papers an exemplary rating. Only 2 came close, with a rubric score of 3.5 (this would happen if one rater gave the paper a 4, and the other rater gave the paper a 3). Therefore, only 3.33% of papers scored a 3.5 on this rubric item. Does this mean our students are incapable of recognizing strengths and weaknesses of various theories? Or, does it mean that our BCOR students are not pushed to pursue this type of critical analysis? I ascribe to the second theory, and think that many of our students are capable, but they were either not pushed in this direction, or they did not recognize that this type of analysis was required in their research paper.

Objective 1.2B

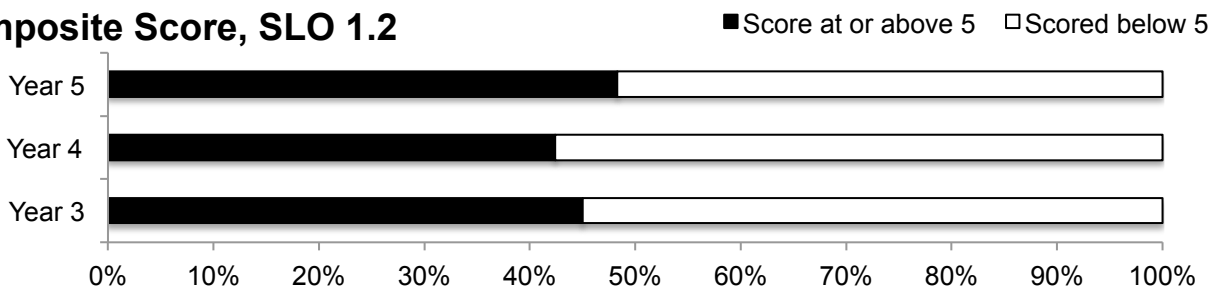


Objective 1.2B showed a great increase this year, going up 13.5 percentage points from Year 4 to Year 5. This increase is interesting in that it was not noted from Year 3 to Year 4. To score well in this objective, students must make connections to the thesis throughout the paper, and must do this using formal academic writing. 65% of the assessed papers scored 2.5 or greater on this rubric item. The

assessment team noted that this rubric item would have been even higher if more students had a clear thesis statement.

SLO 1.2 calls for students to frame questions and develop strategies to seek answers. The composite score for SLO 1.2 takes Objective 1.2A and 1.2B into account. The composite score for this SLO has increased very slightly from Year 3 to Year 5, going from 45% to 48.3% of papers scoring above a 5 when scores from 1.2A and 1.2B are added together.

Composite Score, SLO 1.2



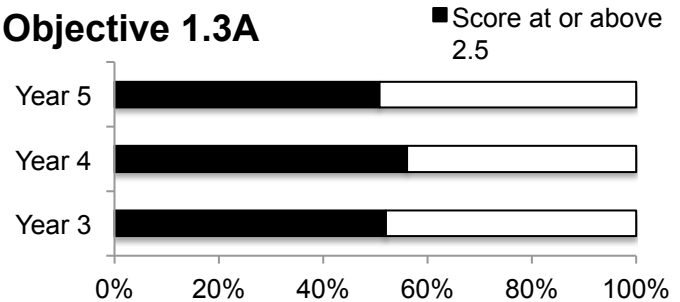
SLO 1.3 Students will analyze, interpret, and/or evaluate information and make and implement research-informed decisions

1.3.A Students will evaluate information and its sources critically

1.3.B Students will use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose

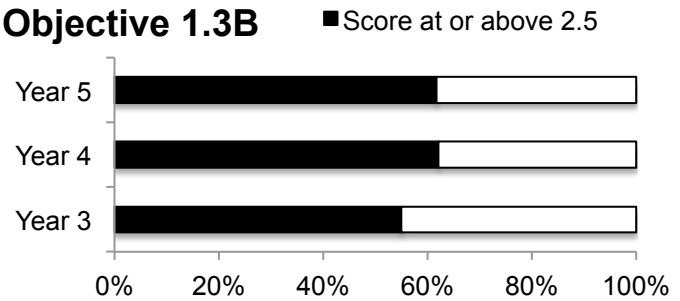
The percentage of papers scoring 2.5 or greater on **Objective 1.3A** decreased by 5.3 percentage points over the past year. This rubric item, which requires students to evaluate contexts when presenting a position, and recognize their own assumptions and biases, has traditionally been one of the most difficult rubric items for students. The percentage of papers scoring 2.5 or greater on this rubric item has consistently stayed around 50% since Year 3.

Objective 1.3A



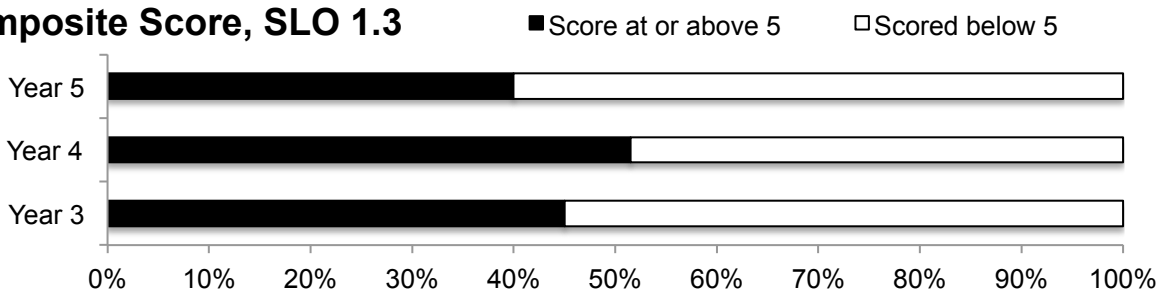
Scores on **Objective 1.3B** remained quite stable, with a decrease of 0.4 percentage points from Year 4. This objective deals with how students synthesize information from sources. We have seen an improvement in this rubric item when compared to Year 3, but the improvement has been relatively small (an increase in 6.7 percentage points).

Objective 1.3B



SLO 1.3 deals with how students analyze and evaluate information to make decisions. Traditionally, this SLO has been difficult for our students. We have noticed that students struggle with using new information to inform decisions, and typically do not identify their own and others' assumptions when making a decision. The composite score for SLO 1.3 takes Objective 1.3A and 1.3B into account. The composite score for this SLO has decreased from Year 3 to Year 5, going from 45% to 40% of papers scoring above a 5 when scores from 1.3A and 1.3B are added together.

Composite Score, SLO 1.3



Factors Impacting Year 5 (2015-2016) Assessment

Organization of Assessment

The assessment team met during the second week of summer (May 16th) to assess the BCOR research artifacts collected from the twelve fall 2015 and spring 2016 sections. Each member of the team was asked to assess 24 papers (120 readings divided between 5 members). Papers were assessed electronically, using the rubric that was updated in May 2016.

Prompts

The team was provided with the four prompts used in different sections of BCOR. The Director of Pursuit/QEP randomly selected the 60 papers from both semesters of BCOR and distributed them to the assessment team electronically. The team was told which papers corresponded to a given prompt. The team appreciated having the prompts for each paper.

Each year of assessment the team has noticed improvement in the prompts. This year, the **prompts were clear, focused, and all of them addressed development of a research question/topic**. Additionally, the topics for the research papers in these four prompts were very similar. The team appreciated the **increased consistency**, and thanks the BCOR professors for working as a team in their development of the research paper assignment.

The team did notice **variability in the types of research required** and the materials used for research in the 4 prompts. For instance, the number of scholarly sources required for the paper varied depending on the section. While we did notice this variability, it was not as marked as it has been in years past. The prompts were better matched this year compared to Year 4 and Year 3.

Plagiarism

During the Year 4 assessment, the team noticed different levels of plagiarism in several papers. In the assessment report, we suggested the BCOR professors use Turnitin to combat the varying levels of plagiarism we noticed. This year, we noticed one of the prompts specifically indicates that students will submit their papers via Turnitin. We found fewer papers with blatant plagiarism, and fewer papers with missing or partial citations (for example, a quote followed by no citation; or, a phrase that was clearly taken from a source, but no citation was given). While these issues were still present, we believe there was an improvement from Year 4.

Rubric Interpretation

Before we started assessment, the team did a normalization process with 5 sample papers. We used the same normalization papers from the Year 4 assessment. Therefore, these papers were randomly chosen from the 2014-2015 BCOR sections. During the normalization process, the team discussed several items on the rubric.

Our interpretation of the **rubric item 1.1Cii** could impact the assessment:

1. Wording of the **exemplary** category: "Paraphrases, summarizes, or quotes in ways that are true to the original context." The team rated papers in this category very few times. We discussed the fact that as outside reviewers, we are not familiar with the original context of the vast majority of citations. We were therefore uncomfortable rating papers in the exemplary category, and tended to rate them as competent or below.
2. Wording for the **competent** category: "Paraphrase, summary, or quotes are close to the original context, but not rely too heavily on quoting or have too little summary." The team was unsure of the meaning of the phrase "but not rely". We agreed to interpret this as "**do** not rely too heavily...".
3. When papers did rely too heavily on quotes, we rated them in the **emerging** category. We decided during the normalization process that papers with >20% direct quotes should be rated as relying too heavily on quotes.
4. Wording of the **unacceptable** category: "Annotations are absent." We interpreted this to mean *all* in text citations are missing. We did not rate a paper as unacceptable if a small number of mistakes were made regarding missing in text citations.

Our interpretation of the **rubric items 1.1B and 1.3B** could impact the assessment:

Rubric item 1.1B addresses the number of *quality* sources. The rubric states in the **exemplary** category: "Citations represent various scholarly or academic sources. Cited resources are used appropriately. All resources are appropriate to the target audience." Prior to assessment, the team

discussed our interpretation of this item. It was agreed that this rubric item focused more on quality and variety of sources, and less on application and analysis of sources. We only counted sources that were actually used in the paper (many papers included a reference in the list but did not cite the reference in the body of the paper). The analysis/application of the chosen source is addressed in rubric item **1.3B**. If a paper chose and cited 10 quality scholarly sources, but did not synthesize information from those sources well, they could score well on item 1.1B, but poorly in 1.3B.

Changes to BCOR and General Education at ACU

In the spring of 2015, the BCOR director stepped down and was not replaced. All of the papers collected for the Year 5 assessment were written after this change took place.

In October of 2015, the ACU faculty voted to remove BCOR from the general education curriculum. Both professors and students knew the result of the vote during the fall and spring semesters the research artifacts were collected. BCOR will be taught as it is for a few more semesters, until students under the 2015-2016 catalog complete the course.

Commendations for Faculty

The BCOR assessment team applauds the BCOR faculty for their dedication to this course and to the research paper assignment. Results from this assessment show students performed similarly in Year 5 as they performed in Year 4. While we did not see very many gains, as we did from Year 3 to Year 4, the team noted there was also not a drop-off in the quality of the research paper. We want to specifically thank the faculty for working as a team to improve the quality and consistency of prompts, focusing on the research question, and for working on student use of scholarly sources.