

**Student Competency of Managing Information:  
Pros and Cons of a Behavioristic Approach to Assessment**

Abstract

Managing information is an essential part of a college graduate's personal and professional success. In the state of Missouri, the Department of Higher Education has labeled this competency as one of four major skill areas of general education. At Missouri Southern State University, assessment of this competency is embedded in coursework required by College Composition II: English 102. 110 artifacts were collected by six instructors teaching eight sections of English 102 during fall 2017. Artifacts were graded based on a common, faculty-developed rubric, consisting of seven competencies, each of which was scored as meeting or failing to meet expectations. Theoretically, this approach to assessment has been labeled as behavioristic. The strengths and weaknesses of this approach were determined through a mixed methods design. Two research questions were addressed. First, does a behavioristic approach, using a common rubric for assessing student writing artifacts, prove useful for assessing student competency with managing information? Second, do instructors find this approach useful? Quantitatively, student performance on each rubric category was analyzed with SPSS Statistics software. 81% of scores submitted for this study were labeled as met expectations. Thus, findings support the use of a common rubric to assess student competency with managing information. Qualitative interviews about the assessment process were conducted with instructors. Instructors' responses were submitted to Word Cloud to examine word frequency and word clusters. Findings support instructor approval of this approach to assessing student competency with managing information. Suggestions for improvements to the assessment process are provided.