

## INTRODUCTION

In 2016 ULS and Office for Undergraduate Research (OUR) launched the Archival Scholars Research Awards (ASRA) to introduce undergraduates to primary source research. With a \$1,000 stipend, students pursue independent research using ULS' special and archival materials and work closely with academic mentors and librarians/archivists. 74 students completed the program since inception.

While anecdotal evidence revealed the success of ASRA, in 2019 with OUR's endorsement, a ULS team initiated the development of tools for assessment of agreed upon outcomes.

Both partners understood the potential power of formalized assessment in identifying areas for improvement, advocating for continued funding, and promoting ASRA to various stakeholders.

## METHOD

We used a logic model to capture ASRA program goals and desired outcomes. Logic model methodology was popularized in 2001 with the publication of the *W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide*. The logic model offers a graphic representation of relationships between inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes (initial, intermediate, and long-term) of a program.

Once the logic model was developed (see illustration 1), the ULS team considered the best mechanisms for assessing whether the program outcomes, as defined in the logic model, were being met. Most of the program outcomes focused on the acquisition of research skills in general, all specifically related to working with primary sources.

The logic model allowed articulation of goals and outcomes of a multi-partner project. The team developed a rubric that mapped to the ACRL-RBMS/SAA guidelines and expanded to include the following suite of assessment tools.

- ASRA pre- and post-skills assessment surveys
- Assignments (evaluated against the rubric)
  - Blog posts
  - Omeka
  - End of term presentation

ILLUSTRATION 1: LOGIC MODEL FOR ASRA PROGRAM

Inputs (Resources & Constraints)	Activities (What the Program Does)	Outputs (Product-Oriented Results)	Initial Outcomes (Knowledge & Skills Impacts & Results) Beginning through Celebration of Research	Intermediate Outcomes (Behavioral Impacts & Results) Program Completion through 5 years after graduation	Long-Term Outcomes (Change in Status, Ultimate Results) Impact of Program 5-10 years after graduation
<p><u>Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Librarians and Archivists representing distinctive collections</li> <li>• Liaison Librarians and Functional Specialists</li> <li>• OUR Staff</li> <li>• OUR Student Mentors</li> <li>• ULS and OUR communications teams</li> </ul> <p><u>Constraints</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity of Archivist/Librarian Mentors</li> <li>• Budget</li> <li>• OUR staff capacity to support programming like the CoR.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Information Sessions for prospective applicants</li> <li>• 3 Workshops</li> <li>• Archival Scholars in Action Event</li> <li>• Celebration of Research</li> <li>• Minimum of 5 hours/week research time by students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of attendees at Information Sessions</li> <li>• # of applicants for the award</li> <li>• ASRA Learning Agreement</li> <li>• Poster deposits to D-Scholarship</li> <li>• Research deposits to D-Scholarship</li> <li>• ASRA Student reflection papers</li> <li>• ASRA Students create Tumblr posts, metadata, collection descriptions, and other outputs aiming to make library and archival collections more discoverable.</li> <li>• Discipline-specific outcome if required by Faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASRA students gain experience in searching various library databases, PittCat, and archival finding aids and use appropriate, efficient, and effective research strategies in order to locate primary sources.</li> <li>• ASRA students increase knowledge of archival collections, rare books, and primary sources and actively draws upon these resources to generate and refine research questions.</li> <li>• Identify and communicate information found in primary sources, including summarizing the content of the source and identifying and reporting key components such as how it was created, by whom, when, and what it is.</li> <li>• Learn ways to communicate research and creative outputs effectively to a wide variety of audiences in writing, public speaking, and visual communication (i.e. posters for Celebration of Research).</li> </ul> <p>Initial Outcomes taken from <a href="#">SAA/RBMS Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASRA students produce higher quality original research because of the program.</li> <li>• ASRA students produce and share original research through professional, peer-reviewed journals, poster presentations, and contribute to the scholarly record.</li> <li>• ASRA students build upon the skills learned in the ASRA program to prepare to enter the world of work, research, professional schools, and graduate programs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be a professional who serves and supports others and provides mentorship to younger colleagues and students engaging in research and creativity.</li> <li>• Reconnects former ASRA students as Pitt alumni to the University and its' immense network of professional contacts.</li> <li>• Advances their earning power, education, and opportunities to obtain research opportunities.</li> </ul>

ILLUSTRATION 2: RESULTS OF ASRA PRE- AND POST-SKILLS ASSESSMENT SURVEYS



## FINDINGS

The use of these tools in aggregate provided a clear picture of the initial skills attainment and some intermediate outcomes. The analysis of the ASRA 2021 outputs, such as blog posts, Omeka exhibits, and final papers demonstrated initial or intermediate attainment of primary source literacy skills, such as discussion of:

- Context of place and time
- Creator and audiences
- Materiality and physical features.

A statistically significant change in pre- and post-skills assessment survey results (based on a paired t-test) indicated that change in scores was likely not due to chance but to the effects of the ASRA program. (See Illustration 2 for skills assessment survey results.)

We understand the potential of the logic model to uncover the attainment of student skills to a greater extent. This will be possible with the continued revision of program goals.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The logic model framework has proven value in:

- articulating program outcomes and discussions with program partners (OUR), faculty mentors, fundraising efforts, and library administration
- conducting longitudinal assessment (from short- to long-term outcomes)

The rubric and accompanying tools made it possible to:

- operationalize outcomes and assessments successfully
- conduct assessments to mapped to RBMS/SAA guidelines

## NEXT STEPS

We will conduct future assessments in two to three years to uncover remaining intermediate and long-term outcomes. We continue to test the toolkit with other literacies and library learning environments, such as Archives & Special Collections class visits in Spring 2022.

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