INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE
• This exploratory project examined the impact of adding information literacy training into the curriculum of a sport management course.
• Specifically, it examined the effectiveness of a two-session training into the overall quality of a research assignment.
• The following questions were also part of this project:
  (a) Is it possible to produce quality research work in courses with large enrollments?
  (b) Does using the Learning Services of the University Libraries contribute to improve the quality of students’ work?
  (c) What is the overall impact of including Information Literacy sessions into the sport management discipline?

METHODS

PILOT STUDY
• Two pilot experiences were conducted. One in the summer of 2009 and a second one in the fall of 2009.
• The purpose of these pilot sessions was to: (a) to examine overall students’ attitude toward information literacy (IL) exercises; (b) to evaluate the adequacy of the IL exercises; and (c) to evaluate perceptions of method effectiveness in regards to class size, student academic rank, and time-contact allotted to the IL experience.
• The summer session lasted 3 hours, it was conducted in the computer room at the Wise Library, and included 17 graduate students in Sport Management.
• The fall session lasted one hour, it was conducted in the classroom with no computers, and included 63 undergraduate students (juniors and seniors) attending the Sport Governance course.

FINAL STUDY
• Participants included 62 undergraduate students of the “Sport in the Global Market” course; 45 students (73%) were juniors and 17 (27%) were seniors.
• The instruction on IL was explicitly addressed in the course syllabus.
• Four IL exercises were included as a part of the evaluation of the course totaling 10% of the grade.
• The IL instruction took place in two consecutive sessions during the second and third week of the spring semester of 2010.
• The class was divided into two groups: A and B. During the first session, group A stayed in the classroom, while group B went to the Evansdale Library. During the second session, each group attended the opposite site they attended during the first session.
• The “classroom session” was led by the course instructor. Teaching strategy used was 100% lecture. Topics covered during this session included: (a) selecting and narrowing down a topic for a written essay; (b) developing a solid thesis statement; and (c) basics of APA.
• The “library session” was led by a librarian. Teaching strategy used was 100% experiential as each of the students worked individually on a computer. Topics covered during this session included: (a) evaluation of internet sources; (b) searching and using main data bases; and (c) basic ideas of how to avoid plagiarism.

RESULTS

USEFULNESS OF THE IL TRAINING SESSION
• Perceptions were freely expressed to the course instructor in the following terms:
  (a) In regards to using data search, students expressed that they found it “important but they already knew this stuff,” also, many contended that “they were familiar with most academic databases like EBCHOST and Academic Search Premier.”
  (b) In regards to avoiding plagiarism, students were not very clear in identifying the fine line between “paraphrasing” and “plagiarism.” Also, most of them did not know that “recycling” a work from a previous class constituted a form of plagiarism.
  (c) In terms of defining and narrowing down a research topic, most students indicated that while they understood the concept they found it quite challenging in doing it.
  (d) In terms of use of APA, most of them acknowledged being familiar with its use. However, many expressed not being proficient in its use.

WRITTEN ESSAY
• Students were asked to write a research essay related to a specific theme in sport globalization. A four-point scale (inadequate, average, good, and proficiency) was used to evaluate five areas of this essay: (1) idea development and quality of thesis statement, (2) focus, (3) organization, (4) use of APA, and, (5) quality of bibliographic sources.
• 60 students completed the assignment (96.6%). Grade score were as follows: 12.9% (n=8) average; 43.5% (n=27) good; and 40.3% (n=25) proficient. Minimum score was 1.8 (n=2) and maximum was 4 (n=5). (see Chart 2).

DISCUSSION
• Findings of this exploratory project revealed the following concluding points:
  (a) Most students perceived the IL training as positive and useful as this helped them to become better learners, to discriminate quality of information, and making them more aware of unintentional plagiarism.
  (b) Instructor perceived the IL training helped students to better organize their thoughts and ideas and, thus, it contributed to a better comprehension of the subjects of the course.
  (c) Librarian perceived that the students seemed to be more engaged during the pilot projects because the course instructor was present, so this may be an important factor with regards to effectiveness of IL instruction.
  (d) This experience showed the relevance of incorporating IL training into the coursework as a part of a more broad and continuous learning objective.
  (e) Several class exercises during the IL training revealed that reaching the level of proficiency still is a work in progress in spite of the fact that most students had been previously exposed to some level of IL training.
  (f) In addition, this experience highlighted the importance of adding IL as an integral part of the course. This might suggest a possible change in students’ disposition and attention to the IL content.
  (g) Several recommendations can be drawn from this exploratory project when implementing future experiences in IL. Into the course work: (a) consider small classrooms as this will allow more control and better attention to students’ IL specific concerns; (b) allow several short sessions of IL training through the semester; (c) include hands-on activities as opposed to pure lecturing; (d) making it part (requirement) of the course, and (e) include graded IL exercises related to the subject of the course.