

Grey Literature:

A Pilot Course Program constructed and implemented
via Distance Education

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Grey Foundations in Information Landscape

**House of the Province
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Background Information:

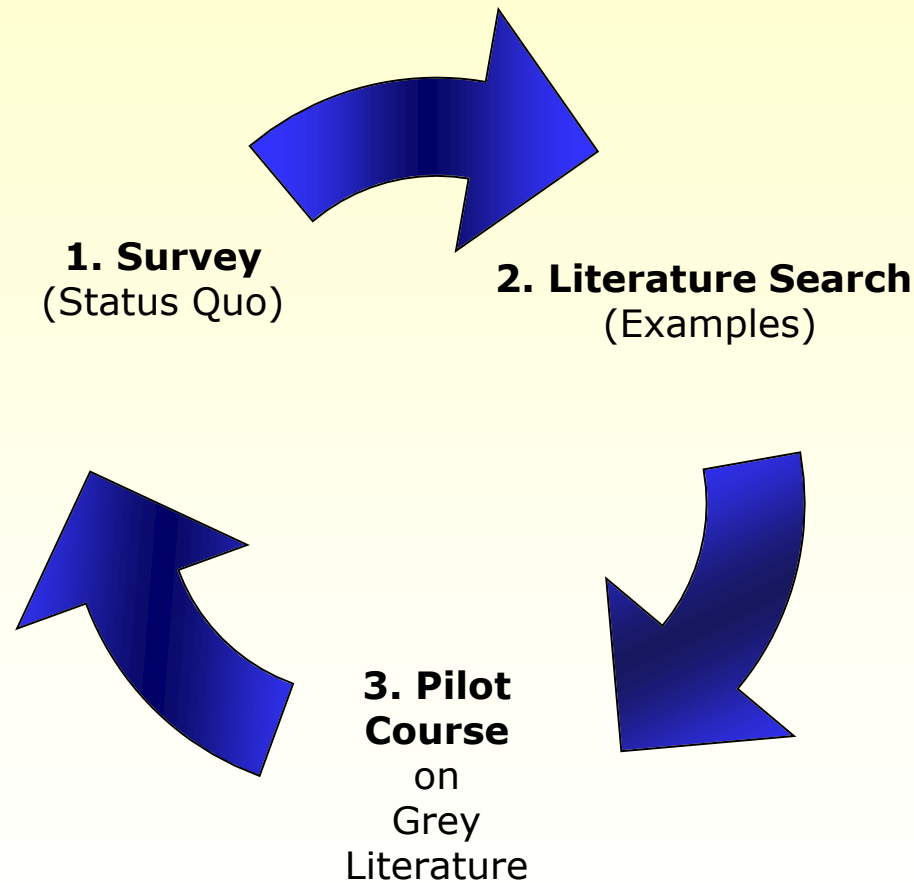
- Gelfand's paper on Grey Literature related to Distance Education, **1999**
- Results from the Survey on Grey Literature **2004**
- Roundtable on Curriculum Development and Grey Literature, **2006**

Premise and Goal:

If Grey Literature constitutes a field in Library and Information Studies, then it must be offered to LIS students as an accredited college course. Given the state of the art in grey literature, Distance Education now offers a viable means of implementing an accredited course on Grey Literature



Method of Approach



Survey

Survey Procedure:

- Construct a questionnaire in both English and French
- Mount the 8-item online questionnaire to GreyNet's Website
- Duration – September 10th thru October 10th 2007
- Use GreyNet's and INIST's channels for distribution purposes
- Use of Excel to process responses

Questionnaire Items:

1. Your email address?
2. Are you a Student/former Student or an Instructor?
3. On what level (s) of education are/were you engaged (e.g. BA, MA, PhD, etc.)?
4. What is the name of your academic institution?
5. What is the title of the course in which grey literature is/was covered?
6. Can you briefly describe the content dealt with on grey literature?
7. Did you complete a thesis or research project on a subject dealing with GL?
8. Other Comments?

Control:

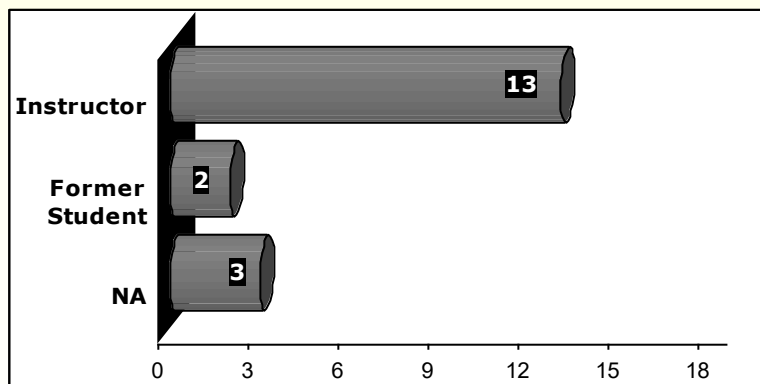
- Further examples of findings from the Literature Search



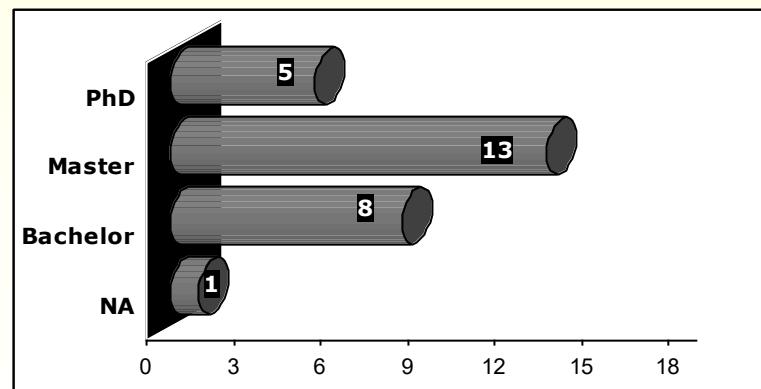
Survey Results

- 19 Responses (**18** valid, **1** invalid)
- **Item 1: 10 Countries**
(CA=1, FR=5, ES=2, IT=1, MA=1, NL=2; PL=1, PT=1, SI=1, US=3)
- **Item 4: Respondents Organization**
(University=14, LIS Schools=2, Research Center=2)

Item 2: Academic Status of Respondent



Item 3: Level of Education



Survey Results *(continued)*

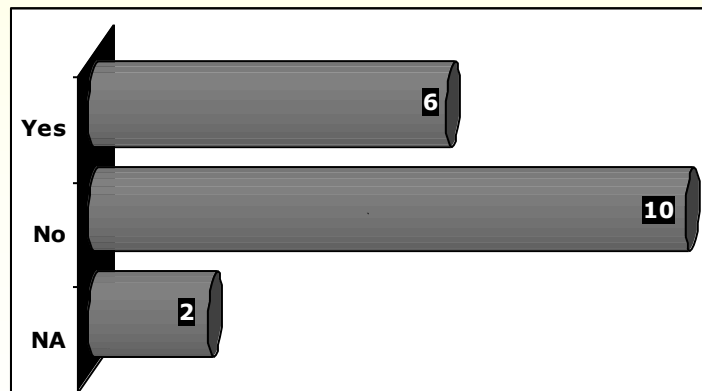
Item 5: Title of the Course in which Grey Literature is covered

Scientific writing, Documentary information sources, Methods of information retrieval and management, Evaluation of information frontiers, Special libraries, Librarianship, Health information sources and services, Scientific and technical information, etc.

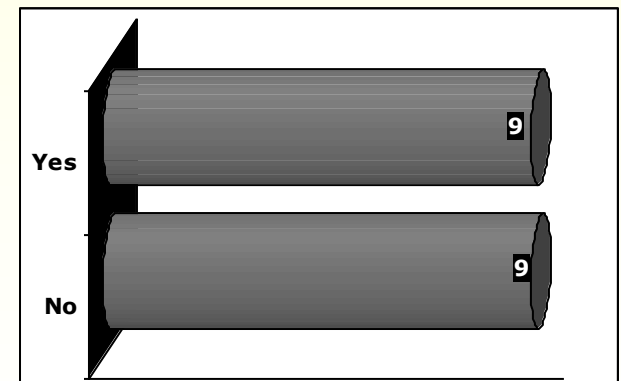
Item 6: Content of the Course on Grey Literature

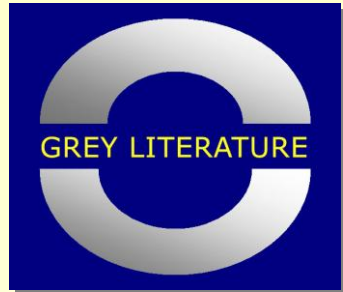
Definition, types of documents, **how to produce reports**, history, users, research plan, dissemination, **collection development**, access, producers, **searching for GL**, problems and challenges, etc.

Item 7: Completed Thesis/Research Project



Respondent's Involvement in GL-Series





Pilot Course on Grey Literature: Stakeholders

UNO, Distance Education Program

GreyNet, Grey Literature Network Service

EBSCO, LISTA-FT Database

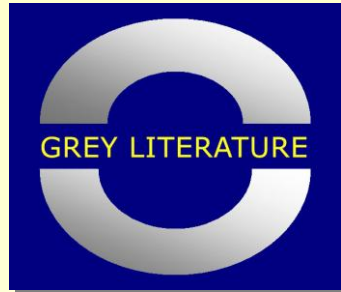
Students, Upper-level Undergraduate/Graduate

***Accreditation**

***Qualified Instruction**

***Access to Course Content**

***Student Enrolment**



Pilot Course on Grey Literature: System and Courseware

- **Blackboard, Bb**

System Software providing functionalities such as email connectivity, dedicated announcement board and document archive, student enrolment and grade book, etc.

- **Course Syllabus**

Course title and description, about the instructor, assignments and assessment, semester outline and due dates

- **e-Reader**

Required Reading List divided into five sections each dealing with a particular aspect of grey literature. Each section includes four assigned articles. The full-text of all 20 journal articles are available via EBSCO's LISTA-FT Database. And, an Appendix provides links to other resources in grey literature

- **Test and Assignments**

Open-ended test on the Assigned Readings, A Case Study, and the Design of a Research Proposal on Grey Literature



Pilot Course on Grey Literature: Student Results

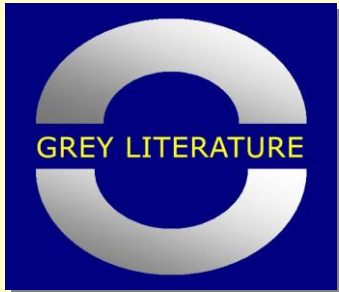
Student Profile:

- 14 Students enrolled in the Fall 2007 Semester Course on Grey Literature, EDLS 4990
- The students came from UNO's General Education and LIS Departments
- 9 Students completed the course, while 6 dropped within the grace period
- The 9 who completed the course were upper-level undergraduate students
- 5 seniors and 4 juniors; 7 female and 2 male students

Student Performance: (Overall Student Average = 76.9%)

The semester was divided into 3 equal parts and each closed with a written assignment:

- Aug.20th-Sep.20th 2007, Test Assigned Readings, Grades A+ to D+ (Average = 76.4%)
- Sep.21st-Oct.26th 2007, Case Study, Grades A to C- (Average = 81.3%)
- Oct.27th-Nov.30th 2007, Research Proposal, Grades A- to D+ (*Average 73.1%*)



Pilot Course on Grey Literature: Course Results

- The Syllabus and 16 Week Planner was approved, posted, and remained unchanged during the Fall 2007 Semester (August 20 to December 7);
- 3 hours of Course Accreditation for 9 students;
- 35.7% withdrawal rate compared with a 20% average for Distance Education Courses;
- Those who signed-up for the Course were all previously enrolled at UNO;
3 students outside UNO inquired about possible enrolment
- Instructor emails: (ca.125 with students; ca.80 with administrators)
- Blackboard (Bp) postings: 9 permanent and 5 temporary
- Meetings between Course Instructor and other Course Stakeholders:
New Orleans (USA), Oct. 18, 2007 and Nancy (FR), Oct. 24, 2007
- Evaluation of the Course by Students and UNO Faculty (*forthcoming*)

Comments, Remarks, Questions

- LIS Colleges and Schools should be counted among the Grey Foundations in Information Landscape;
- The survey and literature search affirm that no prior course-for-credit had been either given or taken on grey literature;
- Based on the results that are available, the pilot met with some measure of success for all of the stakeholders;
- Final results are as yet incomplete. Results from the UNO student evaluation forms, the post-semester assessment with UNO Faculty members, and the comments and recommendations from this GL9 Panel Session have still to be incorporated;
- During the course of the pilot, further issues/questions arose: (1.) Should the course be available to General Ed as well as LIS majors/minors? (2.) Should a student who completes the course be allowed to carry out his/her research proposal for further academic credit? (3.) How can the course be marketed to other LIS Colleges and Schools? (4.) Is the content and structure of the course viable beyond a Distance Education Program?



Summary Statement

Distance Education provides an adequate structure for a college level course on Grey Literature. The results of this pilot warrant that serious consideration be given by other Colleges and Schools of Library and Information Science. To this end, a marketing strategy should be drafted by the existing and potential stakeholders in the pilot. Emphasis should be placed on securing and capitalizing on investments that have already been made, as well as the quality of the course content and instruction.

Thank You!

