FROM LOCAL INNOVATION TO SHARED PRACTICE: DISSEMINATING THE LGAS RUBRIC FOR LIBRARY GUIDE DESIGN

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SpringShare's tool, LibGuides, which helps in creating library guides, is popular for educating students, faculty, and staff about library resources, tools, and services, largely due to its ease of use. [1][2] For many libraries, LibGuides are the essential and primary tool for creating content about the library.[3] In 2021, Hennesy & Adams reported that of the 131 R1 Institutions that they evaluated for LibGuides, 95 percent hosted a public library guide platform to disseminate information.[4] As of September 2025, Springshare reports that 7,500 institutions across 106 countries utilize LibGuides platforms, with an estimated 250,000 librarian users creating them.[5]

Despite the prolific use of library guides, they can be problematic as design standards for pedagogically designing library guides are lacking.[6][7] In their recorded LOEX session (viewable on YouTube), Lechtenberg & Gold playfully present the challenges and potential to improve library guide quality and reinforce the many issues that library guide authors can create if they're not careful with thinking through a library guide's purpose and content.[8] Issues include content selection, layout, and alignment of guide objectives to the content of the guide.[9]

Bergstrom-Lynch argues that research on instructional design regarding library guides is rare and is only just starting to gain traction.[10] It is not surprising that, given the minimal literature published on library guides and instructional design principles, few librarians scrutinize library guides through the lens of pedagogists or instructional designers who advocate for student-centric learning materials.[11] Solutions to design problems are being proposed. This article describes a pedagogical tool developed based on instructional design principles and quality assurance, as outlined by me. I designed the tool based on library guide problems that I experienced and reinforced in the peer-reviewed literature. I named the pedagogical peer review tool that I developed the Library Guide Assessment Standards for Quality-Checked Review, or the LGAS rubric for short.[12][13] I created the LGAS rubric by remixing an Open Education Resource (OER) course development tool developed by the State University of New York (SUNY), called OSCQR, the SUNY Online Course Quality Review Rubric.[14]

The LGAS Backstory

Part of my job at the University of North Florida is to assist with curating Open Education Resource (OER) content for faculty who want to save their students money on expensive course textbooks.[15] In addition to traditional library one-shots and research consultations, I am tasked with evaluating online university courses through the lens of Quality Matters. Quality Matters is a proprietary company that created standards that all good online courses should have.[16] I was trained in Quality Matters, and I am a certified reviewer for the university.

1. Logan & Spence, 2022
2. Moukhliss & McCowan, 2024
3. Castro Gessner & Wilcox, 2015
4. Hennesy & Adams, 2021
5. Springshare, n. d.
6. Bergstrom-Lynch, 2019
7. Moukhliss & McCowan, 2024
8. Lechtenberg & Gold, 2022
9. Moukhliss & McCowan, 2024
10. Bergstrom-Lynch, 2019
11. Moukhliss & McCowan, 2024
12. Library Guide Assessment Standards for Quality-Checked Review, n. d.
13. Moukhliss & McCowan, 2024
14. OSCQR-SUNY, n.d.
15. What is OER Anyway, 2017
16. Hulen, 2022

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After reviewing several online courses through the lens of Quality Matters and enjoying the collaborative efforts of working with a peer review team to provide thoughtful, constructive yet courteous feedback, I wondered why there was not any similar system in place for teams of librarians to build, assess, and critique library guides based on their pedagogical value.

The perplexity of not having a quality assurance process with established standards led me to email the Quality Matters company. After receiving my email, the CEO and her team invited me to a one-hour Zoom session to hear my suggestions. To plan for the invite, I wanted to present a concrete tool to the team that represents a library guide tool with a peer review system. I understood that I should not use Quality Matters due to copyright concerns, and I began brainstorming similar tools with open licenses. After consulting with a Quality Matters colleague at UNF, I decided to remix the **State of New York Online Course Quality Review (SUNY OSCQR) rubric**, a course development tool that promoted best practices for course design. The open license allowed me to remix their tool to create the LGAS rubric. Because SUNY OSCQR is not a peer review tool, I added 32 annotations aligned with the 32 standards to my remixed rubric, thereby making it a peer review tool. The annotations clarify what the reviewer should look for as evidence-based on the standard before marking the standard as a pass or fail. During the meeting, I shared the current LGAS rubric with the team and created a crosswalk to the Quality Matters rubric to highlight the similarities between the two tools.

After making the LGAS rubric and speaking with Quality Matters, I decided to pursue a study. I invited a colleague and librarian, Trina McCowan Adams (former UNF Assessment Librarian and now Director of Libraries at Flagler College), to help assess whether students find library guides created with the LGAS rubric impactful. Following the positive outcomes of the study, we decided to design a training workbook for librarians. We felt this was pertinent as we wanted any librarian or library staff member to access the LGAS rubric.

Developing a solution, though, is only half of the journey. We also aimed to disseminate the research, our workbook, and tool broadly and to provide other solutions for training librarians and library staff on how to employ the LGAS rubric and peer review process effectively. The development phase of designing the LGAS and its positive outcomes in Moukhliss & McCowan (2024)'s case study on the LGAS is published online through the OER journal In the Library with the Lead Pipe.

LGAS Recognition

After the Moukhliss & McCowan (2024) article was published, the LGAS rubric garnered attention after being mentioned on the American Library Association website, the American Library Association member newsletter, and the American College of Research Libraies newsletter. More recently, the LGAS rubric was indexed in the online repository OER Africa.

The LGAS Canva Workbook

Shortly after I created the LGAS rubric, we created a training workbook with the editorial skills of Trina McCowan Adams and uploaded it to the LGAS library guide. It now lives on the University of North Florida's LGAS Resources for a Peer Review Team library guide. The training workbook includes an introduction, information about the OSCQR SUNY remix, and information on how to use the LGAS rubric. Subsections include a description of the LGAS rubric, the peer review process, peer review training, and information on the role of a peer review coordinator. Following the introduction, the workbook includes a copy of the LGAS standards and annotations. Finally, the workbook provides a link to a YouTube tutorial, walking the learner through reviewing a guide with the LGAS standards.

Asynchronous Training

After we published the workbook in the library guide, I contemplated reasons why librarians or library staff may choose not to employ the LGAS rubric. One primary concern was time and training limitations. I decided to combat these potential barriers by developing an asynchronous training course on the LGAS and to house it on a UNF library guide, **LGAS Training Materials for a Peer Review Team**. Asynchronous training ensures that librarians and library staff can train around their busy schedules. The training also acts as a resource that they can visit as they start their reviews of library guides.

Additionally, I created an online form using Qualtrics that reviewers can fill out based on the 32 standards. I provide instructions in the asynchronous training on how anyone with access to Qualtrics surveys can replicate the form easily, saving time and effort in learning Qualtrics. As a caveat, the LGAS Training Materials for a Peer Review Team library guide was designed using the LGAS rubric.

The LGAS Workbook Transitions to an OER Platform

Currently, we are working toward publishing the LGAS Workbook with the Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) on one of its OER platforms. The goal of the LGAS rubric is for other colleagues to have access to the tools and utilize them to fit their institutional needs. With the help of FLVC, we are getting closer to completing our goal. We hope to have the workbook published early in 2026.

Conclusion

We invite you to explore the LGAS resources. The LGAS rubric, along with its accompanying workbook and asynchronous training materials, empowers librarians to collaboratively assess and improve library guides with a focus on student-centered learning. By providing clear standards, annotations, and scalable training resources, the LGAS initiative fosters a culture of reflective practice and continuous improvement. Its growing recognition and potential transition to an OER platform further underscore its value as a sustainable and accessible tool for the library community.

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