FYE & the Library: Setting Sail for Student Success

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INTRODUCTION
At Naugatuck Valley Community College (Waterbury, CT), all first time, full time students attend a required information literacy session taught by a librarian as part of their First Year Experience (FYE) course. What is the impact of the Library’s FYE program on students’ information literacy?

METHODS

Before the library session:
- 6 question needs assessment (A1) submitted through online form

During the library session:
- Instruction by librarian
- Small group assignment on locating and evaluating library resources

As part of the Assessment in Action project, the assessment questions were mapped to the draft of ACRL’s Framework for Information Literacy. Students were asked to give their ID numbers when taking the needs assessment and again in class and their responses were matched and tied to demographic data. The 563 successfully matched students who took both assessments were grouped into four cohorts: See right.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information literacy programs are successful when IL is supported as an institutional initiative. This type of atmosphere encourages collaboration with faculty and can make it easier for librarians to collect much-needed data. Information literacy education is also most effective when librarians reach students early in their college careers.


In addition to a review of published literature on the topic of information literacy and student retention, we referenced the following documents:
- NVCC’s Strategic Plan
- NVCC General Education Competencies - one of which is “Continuing Learning and Information Literacy”
- ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

RESULTS

68% of students improved their score from A1 to A2 with an average increase of 19.22 percentage points.

OVERALL SCORING
(563 students)

- Cohort 1: Scored high on both assessments (225 students)
- Cohort 2: Scored high on A1 and low on A2 (27 students)
- Cohort 3: Scored low on A1 and high on A2 (227 students)
- Cohort 4: Scored low on both assessments (84 students)

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Retained in Spring?
- Yes (481)
- No (78)

Age Group
- 17-19 (480)
- 20-24 (56)
- 25-35 (16)
- 36+ (7)

Ethnicity
- Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino (371)
- Hispanic/ Latino (158)

High School
- Waterbury Public (114)
- Danbury Public (49)
- Suburban Schools (187)
- Technical Schools (59)
- Adult Ed & GED (25)

A CLOSER LOOK...

Cohort 3 Low/High
(227 students)
- 81% Retained
- Average GPA 2.489

Cohort 4 Low/Low
(84 students)
- 83% Retained
- Average GPA 1.421

NOTABLE FINDING

Pre-existing knowledge relates to retention Students who did well on A1 were retained at a higher rate than those who did not, regardless of performance on A2.

NEXT STEPS

Collaboration with urban public high schools Students coming from these schools scored much lower than students from suburban schools on A1, and lower on A2.

Personal librarians and additional supports for older students Students above the age of 36 scored lower on both assessments than their younger classmates.