Assessment of Effectiveness of Information Literacy Instruction in First-Year Composition

Team Leader: Krista Prock, Information Literacy Librarian
Project Team: Natalie Snow, Director of Institutional Research, Gill Clary, PhD., Assistant Provost for Faculty and Academic Administration, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania

Question
Does librarian involvement in information literacy instruction make a difference in the research done by freshman composition students?

Library instruction is not required in English 023: College Composition, but occurs in many sections of the course, in many different forms. We looked at some of those sections and attempted to answer our question.

After a review of the literature and based on anecdotal evidence, we posted that students in sections of English 023: College Composition that receive information literacy instruction from a librarian will be more likely to cite a larger number of sources, use a greater variety of resources, and be more likely to cite resources located using the library tools, (e.g. the catalog or databases), than the students in sections that did not receive instruction from a librarian.

Process and Methods

Library Review

A bibliography is available. The word cloud below represents the article titles that were used to help design the study and to provide realistic expectations about results from this type of study. Assessing one-shot information literacy sessions is not an easy task, as much of the expectations about results from this type of study. Assessing one-shot information literacy sessions is not an easy task, as much of the research done by freshman composition students?

Faculty volunteers recruited, 23 sections of freshman composition
Survey faculty to determine assignment type, required number and type of sources, IL skills taught, and by whom
Create rubric for number and type of sources and citations.
Team collects sample and evaluates student research project, after grading

Chart 1 - Average student score out of 20

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**Faculty involvement**

**No Faculty involvement**

In chart 1, the yellow column represents the 2 sections that did not use a librarian (out of 21 sections) for information literacy instruction.

In chart 2, we see that providing instruction in citation use did have a positive impact on student performance.

In chart 3, we see that providing instruction in reading a scholarly article also resulted in a higher average score.

Claims & Contribution

Information literacy is part of Kutztown University’s General Education program (see goal 1 below) and by assessing student performance in information literacy, the project contributes to general education assessment efforts.

While we have found no direct connection between increased student performance and librarian involvement in information literacy instruction, we believe that there is enough evidence to suggest a connection between the content of the instruction and student performance to pursue further research. When librarians and faculty are involved in information literacy instruction together, and mention citations, students were more likely to excel in citations. When librarians and faculty worked together and discussed how to read scholarly articles, student average score was up over 3.5 points.

In further research we will be sure to have a larger sample of sections in which a librarian was not involved in information literacy instruction, so we can properly compare the two groups. We will also focus on particular skills in the instruction sessions.

Results

Chart 2 - Average student score with and without citation instruction

Chart 3 - Average student score with and without instruction in reading a scholarly article

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Goal 1: To cultivate intellectual and practical skills that are practiced extensively across the curriculum in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.

**Domains:**
1. Inquiry and analysis
2. Information literacy
3. Critical and creative thinking
4. Written and oral communication
5. Quantitative literacy
6. Information literacy
7. Teamwork and problem solving
8. Wellness

Conclusions and Recommendations

The evidence suggests that:

- The content of the information literacy instruction has an effect on the number of sources cited by the students.
- Having a librarian and a faculty member work together to provide information literacy instruction may have a positive impact in student performance on the researched paper in ENG 023.

**Recommendations:**
- Look more closely at particular information literacy skills in the next round of research.
- Recruited more ENG 023 faculty to participate in the next round of assessment, including more faculty who do not use the library or librarians for information literacy instruction.
- Ask more detailed questions in the faculty survey to get more information about how faculty members teach information literacy skills in their classrooms.

Contact

Krista Prock
Kutztown University of Pennsylvania
prock@kutztown.edu
http://library.kutztown.edu

Assessment in Action

This project is part of the program “Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success” which is undertaken by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) in partnership with the Association for Institutional Research and the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities. The program, a cornerstone of ACRL’s Value of Academic Libraries initiative, is made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.