A Collaboration Toward Persistence: The Impact of Library Instruction on First-Year Writers
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Research Question
Will expanded library involvement in a required first-year writing course help students develop increased persistence and problem-solving skills when conducting research?

Methods
Fall 2015
AIA team receives IRB exemption and recruits librarians and instructors
In two sections of a required first-year writing course, librarians teach an expanded information literacy sequence of five sessions and work collaboratively with instructors. In two sections taught by the same instructors, librarians teach a more condensed sequence of two sessions

Spring 2016
AIA team identifies themes from data and creates coding schema
Full bibliography available at

Literature Review
Students in both types of sections complete five essays reflecting on their research process (research journals) during the semester and participate in three focus groups

Results
Focus Groups
When you get stuck and you can’t find anything, you kind of just keep looking, so you can’t just not turn it in, so in high school with college you’re going to get a lot of papers off, so you kind of have to force yourself to keep going.

Fast
Difficult
Lengthy
Adjectives used to describe college research experiences

Discrete mentions of themes in research journals

Process changes

Next steps:
• Include a larger sample size and explore links between students’ attitudes and research skills in future research
• Continue to experiment with timing, content, and amount of library instruction in first-year writing courses
• Partner with writing instructors to incorporate teaching strategies that encourage students to develop an “always more” mindset and effective methods for persisting in the research process

Conclusion & Recommendations
While a slightly higher percentage of students in the control group write about persistence and research process changes, research journals from the experimental group included more discrete mentions of persistence and process changes.

Process changes demonstrated by students in the control group help identify what we are addressing effectively in our existing model of library instruction: helping students utilize a wider scope of sources and generate effective keywords for searching.

Students who received additional library instruction:
• Employed more concrete strategies related to persistence, including revising searches, reading and analyzing sources, managing their time, and changing their research questions, rather than merely repeating searches
• Demonstrated an “always more” mindset more frequently, writing about a willingness to continue researching in order to learn more throughout the duration of their project
• Wrote about asking for help more frequently
• Wrote about experiencing a positive change in feelings about research (outlook changes) more frequently

The one thing that worked effectively when I researched was digging into articles and actually reading them instead of just taking them at face value.

At the beginning of the year, I really didn’t see that I had any specific research process. I mainly consisted of Googling things. Now, I have the capability of utilizing library exclusions and removing sources using different techniques to narrow my search options for ultimate efficiency.