In our own words: demonstrating first semester information literacy development

Research Question
How does library-created instruction and online content impact first semester freshmen?
Freshmen at UTSA are required to enroll in Academic Inquiry, a core course providing a foundation in academic cultures and scholarships. The UTSA Libraries contributed curriculum, library instruction and online tutorials to support a course learning outcome requiring students to "identify and describe scholarly journal articles."

Process

Fall 2015
August
Academic Inquiry core faculty agree to participate in AAI assessment. Online tutorials and instruction plans developed with focus on AAI learning outcomes.
September
Pre-test introduced to core AAI sections. 264 students voluntarily participate in online, usage-based pre-test.
October-November
AAC classes participate in a mixture of hand-on instruction with librarians, online tutorials, and information literacy curriculum.
December
229 students voluntarily participate in online, revised methods post-test.
Final project bibliographies collected from 12 class sections.

Spring 2016
January
Librarians met to create rubric based on final project requirements and curriculum definitions of scholarly articles. Rubric is applied to 210 bibliographies.
February-April
AIA team worked with pre-test/post-test quantitative data.
April
Initial data results presented to AIA course instructors.
May
Results
Criteria developed to code qualitative data from pre-tests/post-tests. Analysis ongoing.

Summary of Results:

Pre-test: Digging Deeper: Why they correctly identified an article as scholarly or popular.
This article is scholarly because it has a good appearance, meaning it is well organized.
Schoally because it teaches people something.

Percentage Of Correct Identifications With Applied Descriptions

Students Identified Linked Resource as Scholarly Article

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Conclusions

Students’ ability to recognize information literacy terms and criteria grew over their first semester, however, their ability to apply criteria correctly needs improvement.
Students predominantly used visual format and style cues as descriptors of a scholarly work rather than conceptual understanding of content. Additional coding and analysis of answers will allow a deeper understanding of patterns of confusion.

Next Steps
- Redesign assessment to be offered to all Academic Inquiry students in fall 2016.
- Library tutorials will be reevaluated to include more opportunities for practice and application of evaluation skills.
- Library instructors and faculty will collaborate on curriculum that addresses gaps found during the assessment: elements of citation, structure of articles/journals, applying CRAAP criteria to a variety of materials.
- The Library will work to coordinate information literacy skills between Academic Inquiry and first semester writing courses.

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.

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