Assessing Freshman Information Literacy Skills Pre and Post Library Instruction: A Pilot Study

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Results:
• Students who took the post-test after having a library instruction setting increased their score on the assessment.
• Correct answers between pre and post-tests increased 4%-44% per question.

Limitations:
• The assessment delivery method differed between classes, resulting in a change in the population who took the pre and post-tests. Students participating in our next study will all have the same instructor, rather than students with two different instructors.

• Many students took the assessment outside of the classroom, and we suspect they treated the tests as “open-book” and looked up the answers, although they were told that the assessment was not for a grade. Students who have agreed to participate and have signed the consent form will take the pre and post-test in an electronic classroom during regular class time.

• The assessments took place in the spring semester, therefore many of the participating students were not first semester freshman and had possibly received library instruction in other classes. Next time, the assessments will take place in the fall semester and involve first semester freshmen.

• We will form focus groups with the students who take the pre and post-tests in order to discuss topics related to information literacy that are subjective, such as anxiety, when asking for help with an assignment.

• Based on feedback, some questions on the assessment will be modified.

We asked if students know:
• how to search the library’s catalog,
• how to create correct citations,
• how to access databases from off-campus, and
• the difference between scholarly and popular articles.

We asked if students:

Q5: To find a book in Shepard Library about global warming, which library tool would you use? (*correct answer)

Q7: You are beginning to work on a research paper and do not know which database to use. Which library service would you use? (*correct answer)

Data

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Process and Methods</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2013: Create assessment tool (for pre and post-test)</td>
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<td>January 2014: 89 students in Dimensions of Learning take pre-test</td>
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<td>April 2014: 99 students in Dimensions of Learning take post-test</td>
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<td>Spring 2014: Data analysis</td>
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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 centerpiece of ACRL’s Value of Academic Libraries Initiative, is made possible by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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Conclusions:
• One-time library instruction classes do have a slight positive impact on students’ ability to answer questions related to information literacy in the short term.
• Other methods of assessment on a larger scale are necessary to continue study.