Teaching in Two Steps: The Effectiveness of Using Electronic Modules + Consultations in a First-Year Composition Course

Overview
Cook Library's instructional librarians have collaborated with the ENGL 102 instruction team to provide in-person instruction on literature that is complemented by a webbased electronic module that offers quizzes. This project was an extension of the program "Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success" which is the most critical need among first-year students.

Process
Students in the pilot English classes followed these steps over the course of the class:

STEP ONE: The Module
- Complete the assigned module + quiz? + receive a score
- Neglect to complete the assigned module + quiz? + receive "N" or "0"

STEP TWO: The Consultation
- Attract the best grade score on the quiz? + go to next module
- Score below the benchmark on the quiz? + refer to the reference librarians for consultation
- "N" on the quiz? + did not offer a consultation

STEP THREE: The Internet Research Journal
All students, regardless of whether they finished the modules or attended consultations, were required to complete the research journal addressing the four skill areas. These were graded and tallied by a team of instructional librarians using a rubric.

In order to determine the impact of the modules and consultations on student learning, we compared the journal scores in each skill area based on whether they had completed the module or attended the consultation. Student feedback informed our understanding of these results.

* Librarians: Sarah Ezell, Jason Ezell, Claire Holmes, Kimberly Miller, Catrin Tomlinson

Results by Skill Area

Internet Searching

| Average Student Journal Scores for Those Who Took the Electronic Modules and those Who Did Not Take Them |
|---|---|
| Internet Searching | 2.83 | 2.00 |
| Source Type Identification | 2.50 | 1.83 |
| Website Evaluation | 2.41 | 1.67 |
| Source Usage | 2.63 | 1.75 |

Evaluating Websites

| Average Student Journal Scores for Those Who Took the Internet Research Journal and Those Who Did Not |
|---|---|
| Website Evaluation | 2.50 | 1.83 |
| Source Type Identification | 2.25 | 1.67 |
| Website Evaluation | 2.50 | 1.83 |
| Source Usage | 2.50 | 1.83 |

Finding Sources

| Average Student Journal Scores for Those Who Took the Source Type Module and Those Who Did Not Take Them |
|---|---|
| Source Usage | 2.83 | 2.00 |
| Source Type Identification | 2.50 | 1.83 |
| Website Evaluation | 2.41 | 1.67 |
| Source Usage | 2.63 | 1.75 |

Impact of Follow-Up Consultations
In general, the results showed no strong evidence that the consultations positively or negatively impacted student performance on the internet research journal. This is true in skill areas that are self-directed (eMailing Sources), in which significant improvement is indicated for those who attended a consultation. Given this was the skill area with the lowest performance level, the positive impact of the consultation is critical here.

Feedback from 40 Consultations

Techniques
- Note: reported dumpster diving and was 4.14% reported finding comfort in this with
- 21.88% reported favoring entry via viewing the content for the identifying source type module, which may have been a primary impact on student performance in this skill area.

Student Reading/Viewing Habits
- 29.10% reported reading an activity with
- 52.86% reported reading or skimming through modules.
- 24.96% reported not reading/Viewing a different activity for all cases, these students reported believing they would know this content already.

Student Assumptions about Website Evaluation
- 24.87% reported disliking long blocks of text and 14.62% disliked videos. In most cases, the reason given was that neither form is browsable.

Student Module Preferences
- 21.42% reported disliking long blocks of text and 11.9% disliked videos. In most cases, the reason given was that neither form is browsable.

The consultations were most popular with students who attended them. On evaluation, 31% agreed that the consultations were helpful, 4.9% didn’t attend a consultation, and no one reported finding them unhelpful.

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Further research is needed to refine the assessment of the impact of this pedagogical approach.

* These are recommendations to improve modules:

- Include optional instructions for non-traditional user groups
- Provide content in alternate formats
- Ensure the practical value of each module within the module itself

The librarian chat was very helpful.

Student Assumptions about Website Evaluation
- 21.42% reported disliking long blocks of text and 14.62% disliked videos. In most cases, the reason given was that neither form is browsable.

"Isn’t a pdf scholar?"

"I assumed I knew the majority of this."

"I’m not a video person. Skimming is easier with reading."

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