



Information Literacy Needs and Traits of Transfer Students

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Problem

In 2014, UNCG Libraries surveyed all incoming transfer students to determine information literacy skills. 154 incoming students responded. Some findings:

- Students with no library instruction scored lowest in choosing keywords for a topic.
- Transfer students over 30 years old least knowledgeable about basic information literacy skills.
- Transfer students from community colleges least knowledgeable.
- After analyzing results, further studies seemed useful. Entry into AiA program.

Outcome of AiA studies-

Transfer students utilize targeted library instruction and outreach opportunities in order to increase their information literacy knowledge and skills for greater student success and retention.

Studies- Methodology

Study #1- Pre and Post Test

- One shot library instruction for two sections of an elective for transfer and adult students
- Used pre-test, intervention, post-test method
- Test Questions
 - catalog search- identify author, year published, and call number of library book
 - Comfort level with finding books and also journals in the library
 - Most perceived challenging skill

Challenges and limitations

- Attempt to issue pre-test a week before instruction failed
- Time limit insufficient, based on students not having done pre-test in advance
- One question worded slightly differently in post-test
- Small sample size (n=19), as only used matched, full responses

Study #2: Survey of Second Year Transfer Students

- Re-surveyed same cohort who were incoming in 2014, one year later
- Captured demographic information again, and followed with similar Information Literacy questions
- Asked students to identify what types of library interactions they had with librarians during previous year

Challenges and limitations

- Almost half of solicitation e-mails bounced back. Speaks of retention!
- Smaller sample size than desired (n=58)

Literature consulted

1. Bandura, A. (1993). Perceived self-efficacy in cognitive development and functioning. *Educational Psychologist*, 28(2), 117-148.
2. Yeo, S. (2016). A Library Instruction Survey for Transfer Students: Implications for Library Services. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30(2), 102-108.
3. Phillips, J. and Arnsper, T. (2010). Transferring Skills, Transferring Students: A Call To Academic Librarians. *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 17(6), 331-346.

Results, Pre/Post Test

3 Question Test

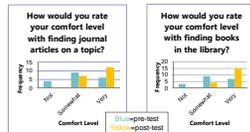
- Rubric created to score test results
- Paired Sample Tests on all data and T-Tests on selected data
- Some improvement in pre and post tests, but not statistically significant

Attitudinal Questions

- Answers on a three point Likert Scale
- Statistically significant difference in comfort levels before and after
 - 25% increase in comfort for finding journal articles
 - 26% increase in comfort for finding books
- Several students indicated "not comfortable" with finding books and journals before, but zero indicated "not comfortable after".

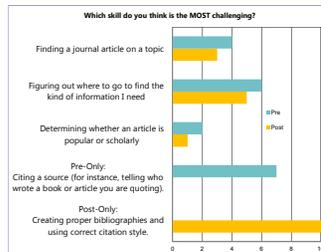
Most challenging skill

- Proper citation most challenging in both before and after, though question worded slightly differently
- Figuring out where to go to get information needed second most challenging
- Finding journal article on topic third most challenging
- Determining whether article is popular or scholarly least challenging
- Many respondents stated that a library tour would be useful.



Challenges citing sources:

"The different formats on citing a source, for example, MLA and APA." "Because there are many different ways to cite and I am not familiar with doing so."



Challenges finding journal articles

"I think it will be challenging because there are so many articles to choose from and having to go through and find one that fits with my research would be difficult."

Challenges finding kind of information needed:

"Because that is usually the most challenging for me at any library, since it is so broad."

"When it is time to find information, sifting through the minutiae will still be challenging."

Results, Survey

Notable results

- 59% had had library instruction in the year since arrival.
- Older students were more likely to have had a longer gap between transferring institutions (this was important because previous study showed older students were least knowledgeable about basic information literacy skills. This result could explain why.)
- Students who received library instruction were more likely to later seek consultations with subject librarians.

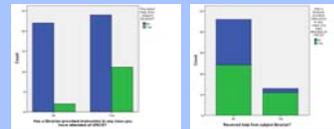
Results showed no significant differences in information literacy skills by:

- Age
- Transferring institution type
- Exposure to library instruction
- Exposure to reference interactions

Our 2014 study showed statistically significant relationships between transferring institution, age range, and information literacy skills. This follow-up study did not.

Potential explanations for data results:

- About half of 2014 survey e-mails bounced back. Perhaps many of the students who scored lowest are no longer enrolled.
- One year of instruction in a four year college possibly boosting skills of previous low scorers.
- Smaller sample size might not tease out significant differences as well as larger sample size.



How many years has it been since you attended another college or university?	No gap	What is your age?			Total
		18-22	23-29	30-59	
No gap	Count	25	14	3	42
	Expected Count	21.4	13.5	7.1	42.0
	Standardized Residual	8	1	-1.5	
One or more years	Count	5	5	17	17
	Expected Count	8.6	5.5	11.0	17.0
	Standardized Residual	-1.2	-2	1.5	
Total	Count	30	19	10	59
	Expected Count	30.0	19.0	10.0	59.0

Claims & Contributions

Claim 1: Incoming Transfer students who receive an Information Literacy instruction session demonstrate improved information Literacy skills in a post-test. **Reality:** Some improvement; however, not statistically significant. **Reality:** Incoming Transfer students demonstrate greater confidence in searching for books and journal articles after attending an Information Literacy session.

Claim 2: Second Year Transfer students who have had interactions with librarians during their first year at UNCG will score higher on basic Information Literacy skills.

Reality: Second Year Transfer students who have participated in a librarian-led information Literacy instruction session are significantly more likely to seek out consultations with their subject librarian.

Conclusions

- Neither study showed statistically significant improvement in performance based on previous library intervention.
- Both studies show that exposure to library instruction increased confidence in performing research tasks and increased willingness to seek out subject librarians for one on one consultations. Increased exposure to librarian intervention may eventually lead to greater research skills.
- Sample size may have affected the number of statistically significant findings in both studies.
- Self-efficacy beliefs contribute to motivation and performance (Bandura, 1993). Increase in confidence will hopefully lead to greater sense of self-efficacy.

Recommendations

- Find means of increasing response rate, given tendency towards e-mail survey fatigue
- Ask for unique identifier next time in order to increase demographic information pool
- Since interactions with librarians increase confidence, seek out opportunities to reach transfer students in orientations and specialized instruction sessions
- Make sure Pre-test and Post-test are issued outside of class time
- Tweak library instruction to focus on library skills students find most challenging
- Connect with largest feeder community colleges in order to coordinate hand-off instruction

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.