

Demonstrating the Value of Academic Libraries Using Student Level Data: Linking Library Use and Experiences with Student Success



UWSP AND THE LIBRARY

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is part of the University of Wisconsin System which is made up of 13 four-year universities and 13 two-year campuses. Enrollment is just under 9,000 with the majority of students pursuing baccalaureate degrees in 27 areas of study.

AiA → ASSESSMENT IN ACTION 2 YEAR PROJECT

The library was selected to participate in the second cohort of the ACRL Assessment in Action Initiative. Team members consisted of myself, the instruction librarian and two Department of English faculty members. I was hired by the library at the beginning of the second year and took over the project after our instruction librarian resigned.

Fall 2014 → Students in 36 sections of a required Communications 101 class received a 50 minute library instruction session and were given a 3 question pre and post-test to be completed in Desire2Learn, the campus course management software. 603 students completed the pre-test and 430 completed the post-test. The questions on the pre-test and post-test were very similar and were evaluated using a 3 category rubric to score participant skill levels as novice, developing, or excellent.

INITIAL PROJECT DESIGN CONCERNS

- Varying degrees of library experiences and exposure. At that time Communications 101 was not a required class for freshman. As a result 35 percent of participants were first semester sophomores to seniors. It was very likely that upperclassman and many freshman (first and second semester) had a library instruction session in a previous class.
- No meaningful incentive. Simply completing the survey was enough to get credit regardless of effort.

User 132

<p>I would search the UWSP Library database for the best sources. I believe that using both 1 books and websites would give me the most information.</p>

<p>I would search the different types of vaccines and autism reports across the United States on Google. After finding a variety of reports, I would choose the ones with the most 2 information. Finding the most information will make it easier for my speech presentation.</p>

<p>I would evaluate the different sources on how accurate each document is. The source cannot come from a blog or from one persons perspective. People should evaluate sources in order for them to be as detailed and accurate as possible. Without doing so can lead to poor judgement 3 and inaccurate information causing your speech to be downgraded.</p>

In many cases the quality of student answers regressed from the pre to the post-test. Participants were awarded full credit for simply completing both tests. There was no extrinsic motivation to give a best effort. Note the difference in how user 132 answered the first question about source selection.

User 132

1 Internet. internet

2 politics and climate change, politicians portray climate change issues

3 By author/organization to determine if it is a credible source.

COMM 101 PRE INSTRUCTION LIBRARY SURVEY

UWSP ID Number

1. What is your status at UWSP?

First Semester Freshman (0-14 credits)
 Second Semester Freshman (15-29)
 First Semester Sophomore (30-43 credits)
 Second Semester Sophomore (44-59 credits)
 First Semester Junior (60-73 credits)
 Second Semester Junior (90-103 credits)
 Senior (104+ credits)

2. Since coming to UWSP have you:

	YES	NO
Taken a course in which a librarian did a presentation or workshop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Taken 2 or more courses in which a librarian did a presentation or workshop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used online or print library resources to complete a course assignment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consulted with a librarian (in person, by email, or chat)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Used an online library subject or class guide?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Previous Library Experience

	YES	NO
Before coming to UWSP did you have one or more library instruction sessions in high school or at another University / College / Technical College?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you answered "YES" did you learn about databases like Ebsco (Academic Search)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Did you learn how to distinguish between different types of sources (for example, scholarly versus popular)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Cumulative GPA by Question

Question	Response	n	Avg Cuml GPA
Q4TAKENCOURSEFROMLIB	Yes	66	3.05
	No	64	2.71
Q5TAKENLIBTWO MORE	Yes	22	3.28
	No	108	2.80
Q6USEDONLINE	Yes	76	2.98
	No	54	2.75
Q7CONSULTEDLIBRARIANA	Yes	28	3.05
	No	102	2.84
Q8USEDONLINEGUIDE	Yes	38	3.00
	No	92	2.84
Q9BEFOREUWSPLIBINSTRUCTION	Yes	94	2.83
	No	36	3.03
Q10YESONQ9EBSCO	Yes	60	2.84
	No	69	2.93
Q11PRIORLIBINSTR_DISTINGUISH	Yes	72	2.82
	No	57	2.97

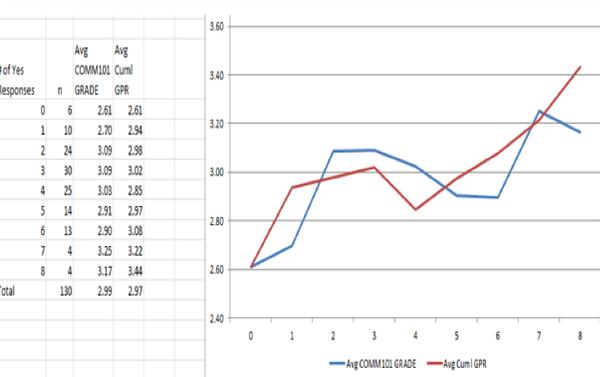
TIME TO REDESIGN!!

Spring 2015 → 130 students in 6 sections of Communications 101 completed a hard copy version of the initial research survey with additional demographic and library services and resource use questions. This was completed in class before the instruction session. There was no post-test. The revised assessment tool gathered student ID numbers which were anonymized by Institutional Research. Eight library “touch points” were added. The data showed that students with more exposure to library instruction and library resources had higher grade point averages!

THE RESULTS

Students who responded “YES” to the first 5 questions regarding library instruction experiences and use of library services and resources had notably higher grade point averages than those that answered “NO”. Students who indicated having one library instruction session had a .34 higher GPA when compared to those that indicated they had never had a library session. The difference was even more pronounced (.48 difference in GPA) between students who had two or more library instruction sessions and students that had one or none.

It was interesting to find that students who responded “YES” to having had library instruction either in a high school or at another institution had slightly lower GPAs than students that did not. Students who had used EBSCOhost or another database and had instruction on distinguishing between types of sources also had lower GPA’s than students that did not. This is something that deserves further exploration.

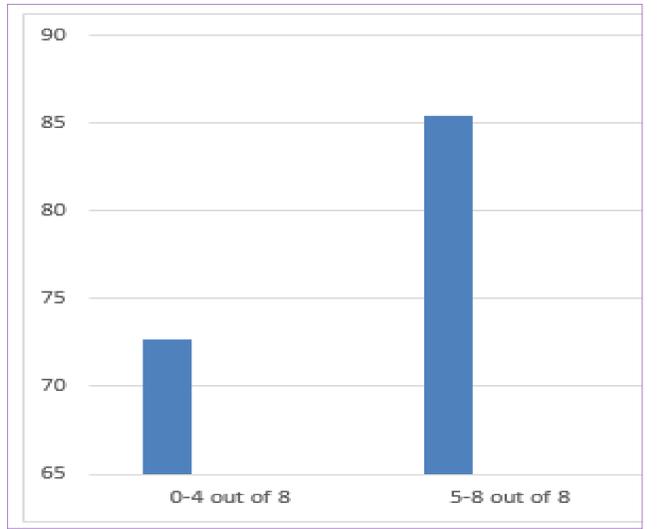


RESULTS OF TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED BEFORE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT REVISION

Examined the text to determine if the initial intervention had an impact on the “sophistication of language” as it relates to information literacy and the research process. When asked what type of resource would generally be the most credible and authoritative, use of the phrase “peer reviewed” increased by 25 percent from the pre to the post-test (despite 173 less participants in the post) and the word scholarly was used 35 percent more. When asked about the research process students mentioned contacting a librarian 22 times on the pre-test and 65 times on the post.

STILL WORKING WITH THE DATA!

We recently ran student ID numbers to determine if there was a correlation between library instruction and the use of library services and resources and student retention from the spring of 2015 when the data was collected and spring of 2016. Students who answered “YES” to 5 or more of the 8 library questions were retained at nearly a 13 percent higher rate than students that answered “YES” to 4 or fewer questions.



Library Assessment and Breaking New Ground at UWSP!

The results were shared with colleagues across the state at the Wisconsin Library Association Conference and also with colleagues on campus at our annual Teaching Conference. The results brought local interest across the disciplines. Recently I was elected co-chair of the campus Assessment Committee. Sharing what we learned brought awareness to the fact that the library is as interested in student learning as departments are.