First Year Writing
Information Literacy Assessment
Fall 2018

This report includes five sections:
1. A ‘numbers’ overview of 2018 FYW library instruction;
2. a description of the library instruction plan for FYW;
3. a summary of the librarians’ reflections on FYW, what worked well and what could be improved;
4. a summary of the FYW faculty survey results along with faculty comments;
5. action steps going forward.

Overview

- In the Fall 2018 semester, librarians taught sessions in 41 out of 50 (82%) FYW classes.
- In total, 827 students attended FYW library instruction sessions, which is 79% of students enrolled in FYW in Fall 2018.
- 23 out of 29 (79%) FYW instructors requested library instruction for their classes. Of the 6 instructors who did not request instruction, 2 are full-time faculty members and 4 are adjuncts.
- The percentage of taught sessions and instructors are the exact same as Fall 2017.

Library Instruction Lesson Plan

Library instruction in First Year Writing focuses on the ACRL Information Literacy Threshold Concept “Searching as Strategic Exploration.” The learning outcomes are as follows:

- Conduct background research and brainstorming to focus a topic, develop keywords, and generate an appropriate research question
- Use subject headings to refine and focus searches
- Conduct a search in a general library database using multiple search boxes and available limiters to locate relevant information sources
- Identify reasons why an initial search may not be successful and revise appropriately

We continued to use the pre-assignment this fall semester, where students complete before coming to class and used the entire class time to engage students in a group activity that built on the learning from the pre-assignment. Before class, students were directed to a librarian-created research guide. Students viewed a series of short videos that introduced the concepts of topic selection, the iterative nature of research, and ways to improve unsuccessful searches. They also completed a tutorial on database searching, using the Academic Search Premier database as a
model. There were a total of 552 completions of the database searching tutorial, which means 67% of FYW students that received library instruction participated in the pre-assignment.

While the librarians enjoyed having a ‘flipped classroom’ approach to library instruction, there were some issues reported with the pre-assignment, including difficulty accessing and using the tutorial and difficulty recording completion of the tutorial on the part of the faculty member. In addition, some faculty members did not assign it to their classes. Modifications to the pre-assignment are being considered for Fall 2019, including improving access and streamlining the content.

The in-class group work focused on a sample research question provided by the librarians. In many cases, the question was derived from the theme of the class and the upcoming research assignment. Students then worked in groups to brainstorm keywords with which to search, then performed various searches in the Academic Search Premier database. They used worksheets to record their search terms and most successful searches. Students also identified relevant subject headings during their search time and listed these on the worksheets as well. As a culminating activity, each group selected one member to report to the class on the group’s work.

Some librarians experimented with the activity, modifying it to where students could work with their current research question, and worked with a partner to help each other perform searches, find new keywords, and discover appropriate search headings.

**Librarian Reflections**
The librarians' reflections on 2018 FYW instruction were mixed. Librarians reported feeling as though their success with the session was too dependent on the faculty member communicating the necessity of the pre-assignment to their students. However, librarians reported that the lesson and activity themselves were timely, appropriate and generally engaging with the students. Improving the back end of the process could result in more effective instruction.

**Faculty Survey Results**
The survey was sent to 23 faculty members at the end of the semester. 7 faculty members responded to the survey. While most of the responses were “strongly agree” or “agree”, there was several of the questions had 2 or fewer “neither agree nor disagree” responses and one question had a “strongly disagree” response about the effectiveness of the follow-up assignment. A breakdown of the questions and answers is included below.
We received a handful of comments, including:

- “...the discussion of the research process as non-linear was most helpful. I reiterated that later to my class.”
- “I think that focus on aspects in addition to keywords and subject headings would be beneficial. Such as filing and sharing capabilities, and other organizational assistance that is built into the databases.”
- “I really admire and appreciate you all; in the past I have felt this has gone better. Part of this change is, I think, that the students don't have access to the computers (in the lab in the library)...”

Action Steps Going Forward

- Discuss with the FYW coordinator any feedback he's received and any suggestions he has for revisions/improvements to the lesson.
- Add a student feedback collection tool, much like the One Minute Paper in Third Year Writing or the One More Thing module in First Year Seminar. As only 30% of faculty responded to the survey, additional feedback would offer valuable insights into the lesson plan.
- Reevaluate the pre-assignment and follow-up modules in order to make them more concise, more effective, and easier to access.
- Continue to work towards finding space for a classroom in the library's building.