First Year Writing  
Information Literacy Assessment  
Fall 2014

Library instruction in First Year Writing focuses on ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standard 2: The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

During the Fall semester we saw 41 out of 47 (87%) of First Year Writing sections and 23 out of 27 instructors requested library instruction (85%). This is an increase from Fall 2013, where 79% of sections and 74% of instructors participated.

An online worksheet was used to assess Standard 2. Out of 594 students who participated, a random sample of 100 was scored using the rubric below.

**Student Learning Outcome: Brainstorm keywords and identify subject headings in order to narrow a topic.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advanced Performance Level 3 (2.5-3)</th>
<th>Developing Performance Level 2 (1.75-2.25)</th>
<th>Beginning Performance Level 1 (1-1.5)</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory Performance Level (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determines keywords</td>
<td>Determines keywords, synonyms and related terms that fully describe the topic/research question</td>
<td>Determines keywords, synonyms, or related terms that partially describe the topic/research question</td>
<td>Determines minimal keywords that inadequately describe the topic/research question</td>
<td>Does not determine keywords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determines subject headings</td>
<td>Determines relevant subject headings that help to focus the topic/research question</td>
<td>Determines relevant subject headings for the broad topic</td>
<td>Determines minimal subject headings</td>
<td>Does not determine subject headings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Librarians’ Reflections

Librarian reflections show increased confidence and comfort level in this second year of using the pre-assignment and online worksheet for FYW instruction. Librarians experimented more with how to incorporate the online worksheet into the class session (at the beginning, end, or throughout), and also came up with new ways to conveying the concept of “pre-search” (using a comparison of the writing and drafting process, for example).
Student learning increased significantly, perhaps due to librarians’ increased skill level with the content and format, and increased familiarity from classroom faculty. The number of students who did not determine subject headings decreased significantly this year, with only 30% scoring a zero in this area compared to 45% in 2013 and 50% in 2012. The students who were considered “advanced” in determining subject headings remained steady at 17%, while the percentage of students considered “developing” and “beginning” increased from 19% to 26%. Overall, students also made slight improvements in developing keywords. 95% were considered either “advanced” or “developing,” up from 92% in 2013. Results from 2013-14 and 2014-15 assessments are compared in the charts below.
The survey was sent to 23 faculty at the end of the semester and was completed by 10 instructors for a response rate of 43%. When asked about the satisfaction with certain aspects of the instruction session, all responded “agree” or “strongly agree” except for two instances where instructors responded “neither agree nor disagree.” Two faculty specifically commented on how the opportunity for one-on-one student interaction with librarians as they are searching on their own helped to demystify the research process: “Having a workshop helps shape the process of research into a replicable model. Having the librarian there to work in tandem with the instructor to assist in the research process seems to reduce a great deal of student anxiety about the research project.” One faculty member also mentioned the need for a follow-up class for those student who are still struggling with conducting research. While librarians offer assistance through research appointments or follow-up email on the spreadsheet, it could be worthwhile to gage overall faculty interest in this possibility.

Recommendations for improvement

Librarians were pleased with how the majority of classes went this semester, and would like to continue the online worksheet format with a pre-assignment next year. A few suggestions for improvement were identified:

- Although percentages of instructors and sections increased, classroom faculty seemed less engaged in library instruction in general this semester. Delaying scheduling classes until the last minute or not fully engaging during the actual class session in the library were more common than in previous semesters. Librarians would like to explore ways to refresh the relationship with FYW faculty and ease the burden they are likely experiencing with increased class sizes and additional duties placed on faculty that could be an explanation for this.
- Ask FYW faculty who have used the library worksheet in creative ways in their own classes to share with other FYW faculty, perhaps at the FYW planning meeting that occurs each fall semester.
- Consider how the recently developed “Framework for Information Literacy” from ACRL might impact this curriculum and what threshold concepts could be incorporated, possibly through the pre-assignment.