

Measuring Impact in Communication Classes

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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.



Background

UW's new general ed requirements include a 3-part communication (COM) sequence.

- focused on academic & professional communication
- written, oral, & digital elements
- key learning outcomes: find, evaluate, analyze & use information

We wanted to know if library instruction was related to higher performance on these information literacy tasks.

Our library had already worked with the English department to assess first-year writing classes; for this project we looked at their multi-section COM 2 and 3 classes, Introduction to Literature and Writing in the Professions.

Key background reading:

assessing information literacy with rubrics
Jastram, Leebaw & Tompkins 2014

assessing tiered library instruction
Bowles-Terry 2012

student evaluation and use of information
Project Information Literacy
Head 2007, Head & Eisenberg 2010

full citations at <http://bit.ly/1VXTOHO>



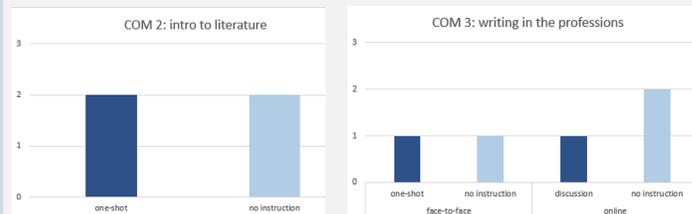
Methods

Librarians worked with the COM coordinator and an instructional designer to develop a rubric for scoring student work. It borrows from the Claremont Colleges and Lane Community College rubrics: <http://bit.ly/1ruW3oL>

	Emerging (1)	Developing (2)	Mastering (3)
Evaluation of Sources (find, analyze, evaluate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on too few or largely inappropriate sources • Demonstrates little critical exploration and knowledge of evidence/theories and sources selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports claims with sources but may not use the most authoritative source to make claim • Demonstrates preliminary critical exploration and knowledge of evidence/theories, and sources selected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses variety of appropriate and authoritative sources • Demonstrates a thorough critical exploration and knowledge of evidence/theories, and sources selected
Synthesis of Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes content inadequately; does not achieve intended purpose • Does not integrate sources with each other or own argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes content in a way that supports the purpose of the project • Integrates sources with each other and with own argument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizes and synthesizes information to support the purpose of the project • Develops meaningful insights based on a variety of sources and perspectives
Attribution (document)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents many sources incorrectly or leaves out citations • Uses in-text citation and notes inconsistently • Cites non-textual sources inconsistently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents sources inconsistently • Uses in-text citation and notes with occasional inconsistencies • Usually cites non-textual sources clearly and completely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents sources consistently and completely • Uses in-text citation and notes correctly and consistently • Cites non-textual sources clearly and completely

*adapted from Claremont Colleges and Lane Community College rubrics

We analyzed 156 student assignments, collected from 4 sections of Introduction to Literature and 5 sections of Writing in the Professions.



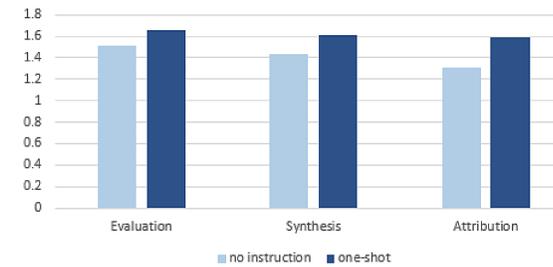
Librarians and English grad students joined the campus team to score assignments.



Findings

Introduction to Literature (sophomores & juniors)

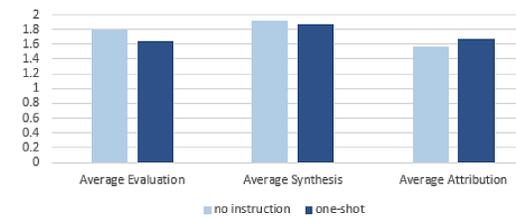
students who received library instruction performed better on all measures



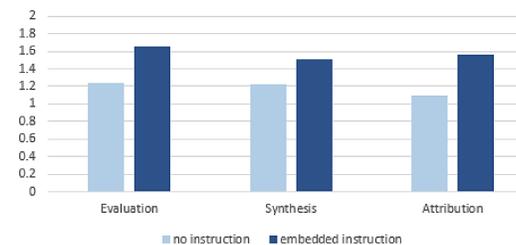
Writing in the Professions (seniors)

Student performance in Writing in the Professions was better explained by their particular assignment requirements than whether they received library instruction. Students in face-to-face sections overall outperformed those in online sections.

students in face-to-face sections who received library instruction performed marginally worse on evaluation and synthesis

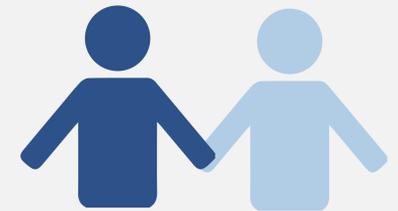


students in online sections who received library instruction performed better on all measures



What's Next

Revising our rubric after talking with instructors about how they judge whether students meet the learning outcomes



Working with course coordinators for the literature and professional writing classes to develop shared syllabi

Tailoring COM 3 instruction to address finding appropriate methods for research proposal assignments



A follow-up qualitative study looking at information-seeking behavior among COM 3 students (including those in COM 3 courses not taught by the English department).

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