Cementing the Foundation:
A Case Study Comparison of Two Different Teaching Platforms

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Introduction:

There is increasing demand to respond to student's learning needs via a multitude of teaching platforms; whether or not the student participates in these options on-campus or at a distance. If we re-imagine the one-shot and often in-class information literacy session in order to capitalize on the actual learning that is required; shorter classes that focus directly on an assignment can be successful in meeting these learning needs. Yet, frequent and more focused lectures are not usually a viable option. Instead, online modules that cover specific topics, coupled with the availability of a librarian for research assistance, may increase the usefulness and value of the instruction.

Objective:

This project focuses on the importance of creating and maintaining strong partnerships which allow for exploration, creativity and innovation. This poster reviews the outcomes of a case study that compared instructional modules offered online and in-person. An assessment of student learning and evaluation of the teaching platform were also performed.

Method:

A sample population of students in the Effective Professional Communications course (RCM 300) in the College of Engineering, was used for this comparison study. Students were selected based on the section in which they were enrolled; with one section being offered online tutorials and the other section, in-class instruction. These two groups of students were provided with the same pre-test at the beginning of the semester and post-test at the end of the semester to determine what was previously known and what learning occurred over the semester that could be attributed to the library instructional sessions.

The case study was repeated in the winter semester. Data was also gleaned from reference transactions that were manually transcribed and statistics from the RCM 300 library guide.

Data was compared with the previous year's library guide statistics and reference transactions. Instruction was delivered in person in 2012/2013 to approximately 440 students.

The project will be repeated again in the upcoming academic year.

Acknowledgements:

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Selected Results:

Partial findings from the pre-survey (51% total response rate) and post-survey (50% total response rate) are shown in the bar graph below. The first two sections illustrate an improvement in scores on the information literacy questions. The second two sections describe library use.
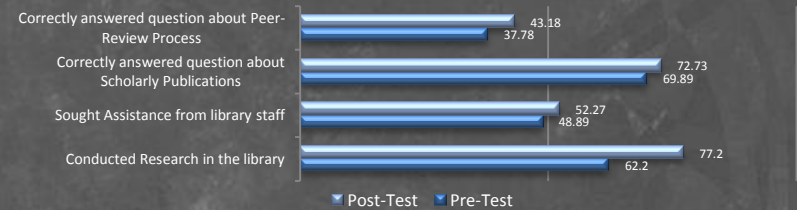
Statistics generated for the RCM 300 library guide show use has doubled from the previous year (2012-13).
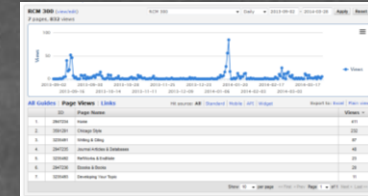
While reference transactions (in-person and email) show a decline from 2012-13 to 2013-14.
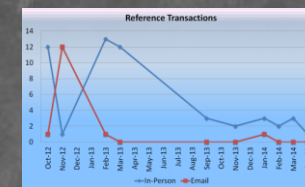
Limitations:

- Even though students received library instruction in two different formats, most identified themselves as in-class students on the survey.
- Print copies of the survey generated higher response rates than the online survey. Next year, all surveys will be distributed in print by a proctor.

Discussion:

The post-survey results indicates that students increased their use of the library to conduct research; as well as highlights marginal growth when seeking assistance from library staff in-person, even though a manual count of reference statistics reveals a decline from 2012-13.

Students reliance on the library guide for assistance doubled from 2012-13 to 2013-14; most significantly when seeking citation information on the Chicago Author-Date style.