BUILDING ON FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS’ INFORMATION SEEKING STRENGTHS: HOW THEIR LIFE-RESEARCH EXPERIENCES CAN INFORM FYE INSTRUCTION

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BIG QUESTION: WITH INCOMING STUDENTS, IS THE INFORMATION LITERACY GLASS HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY?

- Are students empty vessels waiting to be filling with knowledge and already “behind” on the first day of college?
- Do they bring their own personal research knowledge to the library classroom?
- Are students not prepared to meet librarians expectations?

OR

- Do librarians not fully appreciate the knowledge that students bring -- are we missing an opportunity to help them build a knowledge bridge?
POLL THE ROOM!

TO WHAT DEGREE ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH A STRENGTHS-BASED EDUCATIONAL APPROACH THAT EMPHASIZES THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF STUDENT EFFORT AND ACHIEVEMENT?

DOES YOUR INSTITUTION INVENTORY FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO NON-ACADEMIC SEARCH SKILLS?

IN YOUR INFORMATION LITERACY SESSIONS, DO YOU ASSESS FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS’ PRIOR KNOWLEDGE BEYOND ACADEMIC INFORMATION LITERACY? (LOOKING FOR SOLUTIONS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE CHALLENGES, OR FULFILL A CURIOSITY)
Q3 - To what degree are you familiar with a strengths-based educational approach that emphasizes the positive aspects of student effort and achievement?

- Extremely familiar: 3
- Very familiar: 12
- Moderately familiar: 47
- Slightly familiar: 80
- Not familiar at all: 59

Q7 - Does your institution inventory first year students’ prior knowledge related to non-academic search skills?

- Yes: 17
- No: 162
Broadly speaking, the research literature on the information literacy of first-year undergraduates almost universally characterizes students' competency as “lacking,” “deficient,” or “unsophisticated.”

Faculty at the University of York find that students are generally lacking in information skill, particularly in their first and second years (Bury, 2011).

Dubicki’s (2013) survey study is similarly discouraging: only 52% of faculty feel that undergraduates generally are information literate by the time they graduate.
THE MOST TROUBLING ACCOUNT

THE TEST:

1. First-year students are asked to predict how well they will do on an objective test of their research skills.
2. Students take the James Madison University Information Literacy Test.
3. Before they learn their scores, the researchers ask students to estimate the score that they achieved.

FINDINGS:

- Below-proficient students overestimate their scores both before and after the test (overconfidence).
- Interviews show that students tend not to view research as a skill that one can improve.

(Gross & Latham, 2011)
ASSESSMENT METHODS FUEL NEGATIVE CONCEPTIONS ABOUT STUDENTS

INCONSISTENT ASSESSMENT FINDINGS WITH FIRST YEAR AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

A 2016 study found a 37% jump in students scores on the Research Readiness Self Assessment from the first to second year. The author attributes this to library instruction. (Chan, 2016)

BUT, a multi-year study from 2013 found that upperclassman were not superior in skills to their fellow underclassman after library instruction. (Lei-Hsieh, Dawson, Carlin, 2013).

OAKLEAF (2008) ADDRESSES THE CHALLENGES OF FIXED CHOICE ASSESSMENT

BASED ON LIBRARIAN SURVEY RESULTS, WE KNOW A MAJORITY OF LIBRARIANS DO NOT ASSESS STUDENTS’ NON-ACADEMIC SEARCH SKILLS. WE ALSO KNOW THAT FIXED CHOICE TESTING IS THE MOST POPULAR MEASURE. IS THIS A DANGEROUS COMBINATION?
HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE TRANSITIONS

A MISMATCH OF EXPECTATIONS FROM HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARIANS AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

2/3 high school librarians say they teach students to cite sources...

...but, 1/3 of college librarians believed students were trained to cite sources

STUDIES SUGGEST STRONG COLLABORATION AND EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH TO CLOSE THE "GAP"
OUR RESEARCH PROJECT: SETTING UP THE INTERVIEWS

40 OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEWS ACROSS A RANGE OF INSTITUTIONS

LOOKING FOR LIFE-RESEARCH EXPERIENCES THAT ARE NATURAL FOR STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON AND THAT CAN SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT INFORMATION LITERACY
TRY OUR INTERVIEW BRAINSTORMING TECHNIQUE!

1. List 5 things /events/situations in the past year for which you sought an explanation for or were curious about.

2. Of the 5 items, CIRCLE those which had some urgency. Put a CHECK MARK beside those which you were passionate about.

3. Pick ONE item that you would like to talk about further.

4. Turn to a neighbor. What information challenge did they choose? Was it urgent or driven by a curiosity?
OUR RESEARCH PROJECT: ANALYZING THE RESULTS

- A phenomenographic approach...
- The idea is to let the transcripts speak for themselves and bracket out any sense of how the categories should work
- But, this is very difficult because our topic is so broad!

Multiple attempts to analyze!!!
INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS: WHAT WE’VE LEARNED (SO FAR)

INFORMATION NEED: WANTED TO LEARN ABOUT PRESIDENT CLINTON AND MONICA LEWINSKY.

STUDENT PROCESS: GOOGLE, OPINION ARTICLES, YOUTUBE

WHAT WE LEARNED: STUDENT SHOWED INITIATIVE, CLEVERNESS, AND PERSISTENCE WHEN IT CAME TO SEARCHING. FOUND VIDEO AND AUDIO EVIDENCE TO CORROBORATE THE NEWS STORIES AND OPINIONS THAT WAS FOUND IN ONLINE ARTICLES.
INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED (SO FAR)

INFORMATION NEED: WANTED TO BUILD SKATE PARK IN NEIGHBORHOOD

STUDENT PROCESS: TALKED WITH MULTIPLE PEOPLE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

WHAT WE LEARNED: PERSISTENCE TO FIND THE RIGHT PERSON TO TALK TO EVEN AFTER MULTIPLE FAILED ATTEMPTS, RECOGNITION THAT PERSISTENCE WAS RESPECTED, NAVIGATE COMPLEX GOVERNMENTAL PROCEDURES
INTERVIEW HIGHLIGHTS: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED (SO FAR)

INFORMATION NEED: WANTED TO BECOME MORE ADVENTUROUS

STUDENT PROCESS: PODCASTS

WHAT WE LEARNED: STUDENT LEARNED NOT TO BE AFRAID OF MAKING MISTAKES, TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND, AND APPLIED WHAT HE LEARNED TO PERSONAL GROWTH
REFERENCES:


Hsieh, M. L., Dawson, P. H., & Carlin, M. T. (2013). What five minutes in the classroom can do to uncover the basic information literacy skills of your college students: A multiyear assessment study. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice, 8(3), 54–57.