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State University: the Students' Perspective

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An Assessment of the Stand-Alone Information Literacy Course at Louisiana State University:
the Students' Perspective

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to convey the results of a web-based survey given to 2147 Louisiana State University students who are currently matriculating and who have completed the one-credit information literacy course, LIS 1001 (Research Methods and Materials). The survey respondents reported their use of information literacy skills and resources both within university courses they were taking as well as outside of university life. A further objective of the survey was to define the academic rank at which these skills were being used most and in which disciplines.

Introduction

Over the years, thousands of students have passed through Louisiana State University Libraries' library instruction classrooms, both physical and virtual. One of the goals of LSU's instruction librarians is to enable students to do effective research using the multitude of library resources available to them. In the age of Google, this is easier said than done. Convincing students of the value of library research instruction can be a daunting effort. The challenge of measuring the success of that effort turns out to be no less daunting.

Many students take LIS 1001 (Research Methods and Materials) because it is required for their major, and many others take it merely to fill out their schedules, with no real expectations of learning anything terribly useful. The authors know this response from many who complete the class: *Everyone should have to take this course!*

This cry for the universality of library research instruction will resonate with many who teach library and information literacy skills. Similar conclusions have been reported anecdotally in some articles as well as formally in some studies, such as the one done by Heather Morrison in 1997. In her study, participants of a small focus group of second-year and higher students

unanimously judged that information literacy was “valuable” (Morrison 1997, 8). Though the present study did not specifically probe the value that survey subjects may have placed on the information literacy instruction they received, voluntary comments from several participants in our survey express this same feeling in so many words.

Faculty also appreciate the value of information literacy skills in students and prefer these skills to be part of the students’ intellectual equipment by the time they are freshmen (Gullikson 2006). The LIS 1001 Assessment study did not attempt to gauge appreciation of information literacy’s value, but rather assumed it. It is *continued usage* of information literacy skills and resources the authors hoped to ascertain.

Students’ application of lessons learned while they are in the course is easily observable and measurable within the protected context of the course itself. What is not so easily observable or measurable is whether students are applying those lessons to anything *other* than the course. The competencies conveyed through an information literacy skills course “are developed over time” (Head 2008, 427), and if the effort to teach those skills is to mean anything, then students must see the value of what is taught by applying it over time. The goal in conducting this survey was much simpler and much less subtle than the studies of students’ and faculty’s attitudes toward library instruction and information literacy. The authors wanted to know two things: are LSU students applying the research skills taught in LIS 1001 to their work in other classes, and are they using these skills in their personal lives? After all, since 1989, the goal of information literacy has been to create lifelong learners. The authors wanted to know, after all was said and done, whether the students were leaving the skills they learned behind when they left LIS 1001, or whether they were indeed employing their newly-acquired, information-seeking abilities in other contexts. Such knowledge is necessary for “designing and

providing instruction” (Lindauer 2004, 128) in such a way that students will be more likely to apply their library skills to real-world situations.

To satisfy their curiosity and, hopefully, to validate the instructional efforts of LSU Libraries, the authors endeavored to survey their former students regarding the issue of their continued use of library resources. The pool of survey subjects had to be within reach, and this meant the subjects would have to be currently-matriculating LSU students and only those who had completed the LIS 1001 course, not those currently enrolled in it. These limitations, nevertheless, provided a pool of over 2,000 subjects. A simple request of the university registrar provided the authors their subjects’ email addresses. Thus equipped, the authors were now in a position to proceed.

Literature Review

Several researchers into the long-term effects of library instruction have commented on the limited value of the pre-test/post-test form of learner assessment. The problem with pre-test/post-test evaluation is that it is “limited to short-term information retention” (Selegean, Thomas, and Richman 1983, 477) of a specific skill set (Wang 2006, 82). This type of assessment is, consequently, only marginally helpful when assessing a program’s lasting impact.

The LIS 1001 Assessment Survey, though specific in scope, is, nevertheless, a form of program assessment. By learning whether students continue to employ the information literacy (IL) skills they learned in LIS 1001 *after the course ends*, the authors are learning whether the work they have done has had the intended effect. Other institutions have also examined the long-term effect of their IL skills courses, though from starkly different angles and with starkly different emphases.

The Teaching Library at the University of California—Berkley has established a program of integrated library skills instruction in collaboration with lower-division course instructors (Maughan 2001). Since 1994, the Teaching Library has measured the information literacy competencies of graduating seniors. The focus of the UC survey was limited to “lower order” IL skills, such as searching for and locating information. The survey in the current study focused on basically the same skills, though the instruction involved, unlike the instruction at UC—Berkley, was delivered in a stand-alone course and not integrated into other courses. The results of the Teaching Library survey, while disappointing, nevertheless confirm the results of a whole line of preceding surveys. The over-riding conclusion of the survey was that students, who overwhelmingly self-assessed their skills as either “Excellent” or “Pretty good” (77), “think they know more about accessing information and conducting library research than they are able to demonstrate when put to the test” (83).

California State University also embarked on a long-term assessment of information literacy skills (Dunn 2002). CSU’s system-wide survey consisted of an elaborate, multi-modal approach, which included both qualitative and quantitative measures (27). The CSU study sought to determine the efficacy of CSU’s Information Technology Strategy, an information-focused program of instruction, which includes instruction in the kinds of skills taught in most library research methods courses. As in the Teaching Library survey, the CSU assessment included a certain amount of self-evaluation, which coincides in one important respect with the LIS 1001 survey—the students’ own impressions of their information-finding ability. At the time of the referenced report, the CSU study was still in progress. Nevertheless, one of its preliminary findings coincides with one of the LIS 1001 survey’s findings: the research resources of first choice are the computer resources (34).

The librarians of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology had the same essential goal in their assessment project as that of the LSU researchers: they wanted “to measure any enduring impact of the library instruction program on users’ learning and research” (Wong, Chan, and Chu 2006, 385). Their study allowed a lapse of four to eight weeks between the delivery of instruction and their query as to its endurance. This close to the instruction, the study found that most of those who had received instruction found it helpful and that sixty-three per cent of survey respondents remained “confident or very confident in doing library research” (387). The majority of survey respondents felt they retained the skills they were taught, and it is important to note that this reported retention seemed related to whether the students had to actually use what they had learned (388-389).

The 2006 study conducted by the University of Hawaii at Manoa attempted to ascertain “the long-range value of this [information literacy] instruction to college education” by asking how students used the information literacy skills they learned in the rest of their college education (Lebbin 2005, 208). The context of this inquiry differs from that of the LSU survey in that the University of Hawaii’s IL instruction was delivered as part of several learning community courses, which directly linked the instruction to the course content, and not as a stand-alone library course. Nevertheless, students in this survey said they used the skills they learned “in a variety of other courses,” not just in the learning community course (212). Students also asserted that the immediate application of the IL instruction in the learning community course fostered appreciation of those skills (211).

A much older study, done in 1981 by Roland Person, more closely mirrors the circumstances of the LSU survey. Person’s goal was to study the long-term effects of instruction delivered in a stand-alone library skills course. The one-credit course in this study is based on a

basic syllabus, though “each instructor is free to develop the course as desired” (Person 1981, 20). Person’s survey of over 1300 students who had taken the library instruction course during the preceding few years did not measure specific skills, but rather students’ attitudes about their library acumen. Student reaction to the library course was strongly positive, indicating the skills course had helped them in their other classes (23), a point that has particular bearing on what the LSU researchers were trying to learn. Person also confirmed that the students’ appreciation of the course increased over time (23), a finding that supports the idea that students continue to learn more about library resources and how to use them the more they use them (20).

Following Person’s study, Hardesty, Lovrich, and Mannon conducted a survey of long-term retention of library skills as a follow-up to their own earlier research. In their two studies, Hardesty and the others tested DePauw University students at two stages in their academic careers—as freshmen and as seniors. What they discovered is that possession of library skills correlates more specifically with library use instruction than it does with any indicators of “inherent intellectual ability or academic diligence,” such as SAT scores and grade point averages (Hardesty, Lovrich Jr., and Mannon 1982, 43).

The following year, 1983, Selegean, Thomas, and Richman published their conclusions on the long-term effects of library use instruction at the University of California—Irvine. Unlike Person’s 1981 study, the UC—Irvine study, which included students who had taken a two-credit-hour library instruction course from 1975 to 1979, looked specifically at student performance. What the researchers found was a “statistically significant improvement” in the academic performance of those students who had had the library instruction course over those students who had not, even controlling for such indicators of academic success as SAT scores (Selegean, Thomas, and Richman 1983, 479).

Another way of measuring the long-term effect of library instruction on students is their overall satisfaction with the library. A 1998 study by Stamatoplos and Mackoy examined 76 university students who had received library instruction in the context of an English course and their perceptions of the library subsequent to that instruction. Though the authors state their aim was to determine “long-term satisfaction” with the library (Stamatoplos and Mackoy 1998, 323), the data were collected during the same semester as the library instruction. Nevertheless, the authors concluded “the better students feel their skills are, the more satisfied they will be with the library” (332).

A much more recent study of the lasting effects of library instruction eschewed the measurement of specific library skills and looked, rather, at how those skills were applied to research projects (Wang 2006). The researcher wanted to measure “student skills separate from the content of library instruction.” Sixty students who had taken a course in library skills an average of 2.2 semesters prior to the study were selected for comparison with sixty students who had had no library instruction at all (83). The citations in research papers composed by these two groups of students were analyzed and compared. It was discovered that those students who had had library instruction referenced more scholarly publications and had fewer incomplete citations. Additionally, those who had had the instruction in library skills got higher grades on their papers and in their courses. To the researcher, these findings implied that students who received library instruction were more capable of locating appropriate sources and of citing those sources correctly than students with no such training (88-89).

Methodology

Participants

The survey targeted a select segment of the student population within Louisiana State University-- only the 2147 students who had completed the LIS 1001 (Research Methods and Materials) course within the last three school years. The university registrar identified the selected population for the study and provided only email contact information to the researchers.

The survey instrument was deployed through the proprietary online survey tool, Zoomerang. Using Zoomerang enabled the researchers to use different question formats and easily gather data for analysis. Surveys were deployed between October 30 and November 20, 2009. The deployment was scheduled on differing days in order to avoid university email spam filters. All of the participants received the same email asking for their participation in the survey. Information regarding consent and contact information for the university's Institutional Review Board was provided. After the initial email deployment, participants who had neither opted out of the survey nor already completed it were sent three reminder emails in the weeks following in an effort to receive a 95% confidence level in responses. A total of 366 participants returned the survey for a 17% response rate.

Survey instrument

Assessing an information literacy course from the students' perspective is important because it provides a record of progress as well as a guide for any needed changes in the program. Through the 28 question survey instrument the authors sought to determine who was using the skills taught in LIS 1001 and under what circumstances. The survey questions were organized into three sections. (See Appendix A.)

The first section, "Demographics," consisted of five questions and asked participants to provide basic information such as gender and academic rank. The authors also hoped to spot any

trends, such as whether LIS 1001 was required for the respondent's major or whether there was a preference for online or face-to-face teaching.

The second section, "Applications in classes other than LIS 1001," had eleven questions and probed into the way students used the skills and resources taught in LIS 1001 in relation to other courses on campus. Most of the questions in this section (seven out of eleven) were open-ended.

The final section, "Applications outside of academic classes," included eleven questions similar to those in the "Applications in classes other than LIS 1001" section and also one question for participants to provide optional contact information for a prize drawing. Similarly, most of the questions in this section were open-ended (seven out of eleven). In this section, the authors hoped to discover how LIS 1001 skills and resources were being utilized outside of the classroom.

Data Collection

Responses to the survey were collected in Zoomerang. The researchers were able to use a word and phrase "tagging" feature incorporated in the web-based software which aided in coding the qualitative data. All of the data was then set into SPSS 17 for analysis.

Survey Results

The survey included a combination of closed and open-ended questions in which the respondents were permitted to provide as much information in their responses as they wished. Regarding some questions, respondents provided multiple answers. Because of this it should be noted that not all percentages will total 100% (Appendix A). The authors collated the data and

have provided in the following section a brief analysis of the survey results as they appear in the survey instrument.

Demographics

The demographic data from this survey provided the means to test if the sample data was representative of the total survey population (the last three years of students who had completed the LIS 1001 course). Although more males have completed the course during the years surveyed and the LIS Assessment Survey favored female respondents (74%), the data is representative. The authors filtered the responses based on gender and compared results of male and female answers for similar trends. Likewise a χ^2 test of response numbers for Question 6 ($\chi^2 = .21, p < .05$) showed the difference of gender was insignificant. The results also show that the largest group of respondents in academic rank was Seniors (44%); Juniors responded at 32%, Sophomores at 14% and Graduate Students at 10%. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1. Respondents’ gender sorted by academic status

		Academic Status				Total
		Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Grad Student	
Respondents’ Gender	Male	9	15	49	10	83
	Female	38	86	92	22	238
	Total	47	101	141	32	321

Question 3 asked, “In which semester and year (e.g., Fall 2008) did you take LIS 1001?” Responses included all fall and spring semesters from 2006 through 2009. The largest amount (25%) of respondents took LIS 1001 in fall 2008, one year prior to the survey launch. The second largest (21%) took LIS 1001 in spring 2009, one semester prior to the survey launch.

Almost an equal amount of respondents replied to the question asking whether they took the course online (48%) or in the classroom (52%). The final question in the *Demographics* section (Are you a Mass Comm or Comm Studies major?) was asked because LIS 1001 is a required component for Mass Communications and Communication Studies majors for graduation. Fifty-five percent of the respondents said they did not hold these majors while 45% indicated they did.

Applications in classes other than LIS 1001

One of the main impetuses for the LIS Assessment Survey was exploring how students used objectives and skills taught in LIS 1001 in other academic courses. Therefore, the authors asked about research projects in classes other than LIS 1001. Eighty-three percent of respondents indicated that, since completing the LIS 1001 course, they have had some type of research project (e.g., paper, report, or presentation) for other classes.

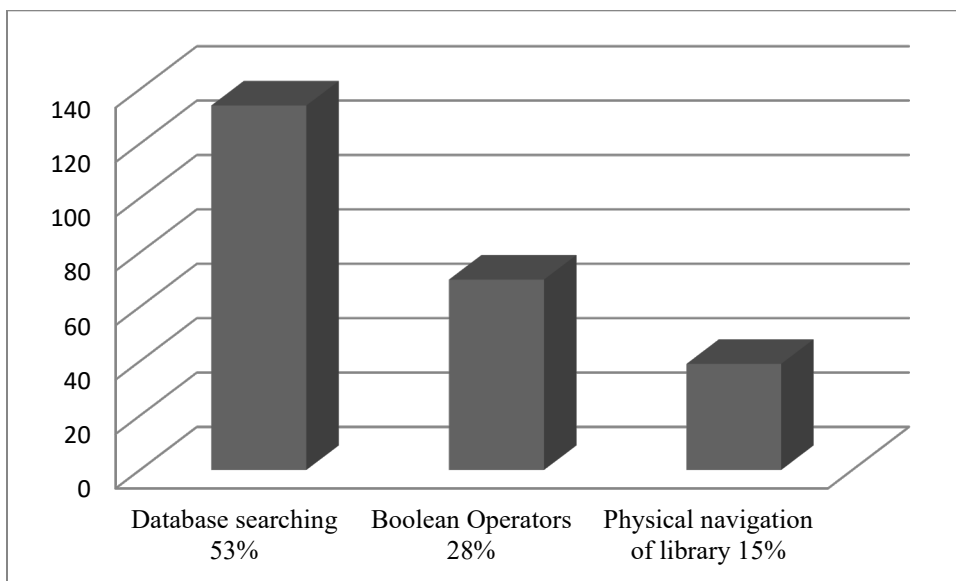
English and mass communication courses represented the two disciplines in which the largest number of research projects were assigned (34% and 30% respectively). Other courses in which research projects were assigned included political science (7%), history (6%), and communication studies (6%). Three percent of the respondents stated that “all or most” of their classes have assigned such projects while six percent indicated an “NA or none” response.

A majority of the respondents (55%) stated that research papers were the specific type of research project being assigned. Following were research presentations at 15%, which included some type of PowerPoint or speaking assignment. Thirteen percent of respondents answered in vague terms such as “research projects.” Additional types of research assignments such as critical analyses, public relations campaigns, case studies, surveys, market research, and

literature reviews were also provided. Ten percent of the respondents described their research projects by listing the research subject matter or research topic rather than the type of project; these results were coded as “Specific Topics – Miscellaneous.”

Question 9 asked, “Did you use any of the skills (e.g., Boolean searching) you learned about in LIS 1001?” followed by the open-ended prompt, “Please list the skills you used.” Most of the respondents (76%) stated they have used some of the skills learned in LIS 1001. Database searching (53%) was the largest skill set indicated. Boolean Operators and other advanced searching techniques were used by 28% of the respondents, while 15% stated navigation of the physical library and the stacks were utilized. Nine percent of students indicated their use of the library’s website for research. Eight percent stated their use of Internet searching. Only three percent of respondents indicated the evaluation of resources was a skill used outside of LIS 1001. “Research” or “search skills” were elusive terms used by 19% of the students to describe the LIS skills used in other courses and were coded as “unspecific responses.” (See Table 2.)

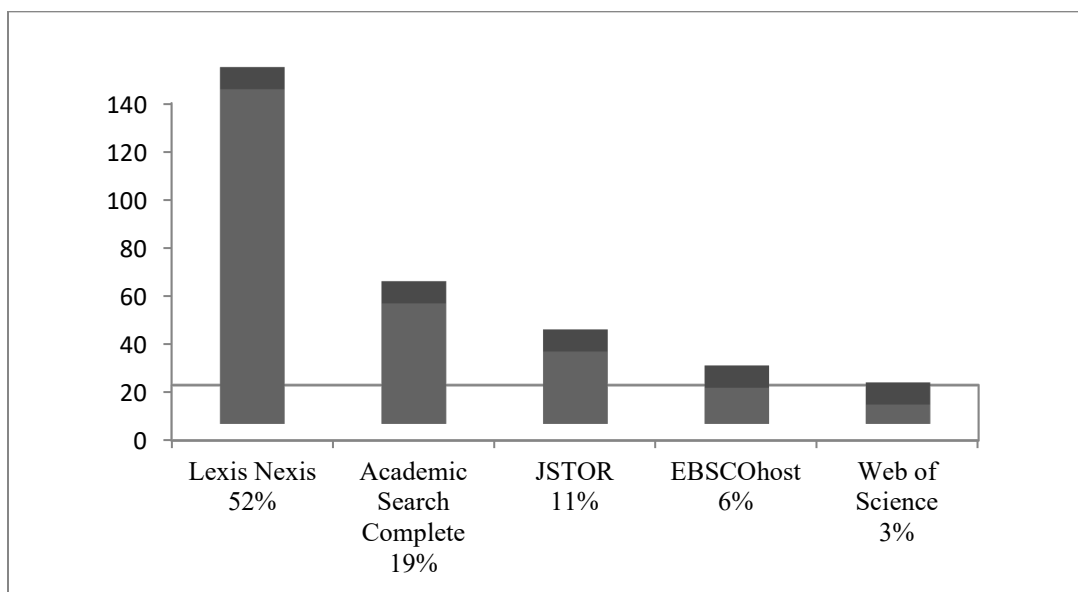
TABLE 2. LIS skills used in academic courses



Most students replied “NA or none” (68%) regarding the degree of difficulty when using the LIS skills indicated for other academic courses. A little difficulty was experienced by 9% of the respondents. Four specific areas of difficulty in using LIS skills were identified by the respondents: 1) forgetting the taught skills (12%), 2) narrowing the search results (10%), 3) locating material (7%), and 4) struggling with the databases (5%).

The LIS 1001 course instructors teach common information resources according to a common course outline. (See Appendix B.) Similar to the use of LIS 1001 skills used in other academic courses, the authors wanted to know whether or not students were using the information resources taught in LIS 1001 in their other classes and which resources they were using. A majority of the respondents (79%) have used at least one of the information resources learned about in LIS 1001. Three categories of information resources were used the most by the respondents: indexes and databases (73%), the library catalog (37%), and search engines (3%). Those databases most frequently used are listed in Table 3, below.

TABLE 3. Most frequently used indexes and databases specified by respondents for academic course work



N = 268

Most respondents did not experience any difficulty using the information resources demonstrated in LIS 1001 in their other courses (61%). However, five specific areas of difficulty were identified. Ten percent of respondents had trouble selecting relevant search terms and creating an effective search statement. Nine percent indicated difficulty in finding relevant resources for their information needs. Seven percent admitted to forgetting the skills learned in the LIS 1001 course. Respondents also included technology problems (3%) and the inability to find information in full text (2%).

When prompted to describe the information students were looking for while using the identified information resources, 39% provided a research topic or subject matter regarding their assignments. This is labeled as “Specific Topics – Miscellaneous” in the results of question 15. (See Appendix A.) The next largest description of information provided by the respondents was that of articles at 34%. This use of the term articles includes popular and scholarly documents. Books (7%) and journals (7%) were also identified as information resources that were searched for by respondents, as were statistics (5%) and literary criticism (3%). Ultimately, most respondents considered themselves successful in finding information for their coursework (93%).

Applications outside of academic class

Only 32% admitted to using any LIS 1001 course skills for anything unrelated to academic courses or school. The specific skills identified by these particular students as skills used outside of academic classes included the use of the library catalog (28%), the use of indexes and databases (11%), Boolean Operators (8%), and the Internet (3%). Twenty-three percent answered “NA or none.”

A majority of those respondents who admitted using LIS 1001 skills for other-than-academic reasons (98%) did not have difficulty using the identified LIS 1001 skills in areas outside of academic courses. When asked to “explain any difficulty encountered” regarding the use of those skills most stated “NA or none” (90%). However, five areas of difficulty were identified by respondents, which included: finding physical material (3%), lacking practice of skills (3%), forgetting skills (1%), narrowing search (1%), and Library of Congress classification confusion (1%).

Only 35% of respondents to question 21 indicated use of any information resource learned about in LIS 1001 for anything unrelated to their classes. The three information resources used by the respondents were the library catalog (31%), the indexes and databases (25%) and the library website (19%). The largest response (39%) indicated “NA or none.” A majority of resource users (98%) did not have difficulty using the noted resources.

Of those who answered “yes” to question 17, 74% considered themselves successful in finding information for purposes outside of academic courses. When asked to identify the information which respondents were trying to find, 36% gave answers representative of a specific discipline or personal concern, 34% provided unspecific answers such as “information” or “topic,” while 32% responded “NA or none.” Some did state they were looking for leisure reading (10%) and a few had library-related inquiries (8%) such as how to renew materials online.

For Question 27, respondents were given the opportunity to “provide any additional comments” related to the survey. A majority of comments (62%) were favorable regarding LIS 1001, examples include:

LIS 1001 is a class that should be taken by all incoming freshman. The information that was taught in this class has made research papers and class projects manageable. It is much better than a one time in-class lecture on the same material. The hands on approach made me retain the information.

and

I know that sometimes a professor will give brief instructions on how to operate the databases and resources LSU offers, but I would have never figured out the extent I could use them if I had not taken Library Science.

Some remarks were unfavorable (8%), and some remarks were irrelevant (9%). Twenty-one percent answered “NA or none.” The last question asked for contact information for an optional prize drawing.

Discussion

Results of the survey present a view of students’ use of information literacy skills and resources in university courses and in day-to-day activities. The authors sought responses from as many matriculating students as possible who had completed the LIS 1001 course.

The survey results indicate that the range of classes in which research projects were assigned included a wide variety of upper- and lower-level courses in several disciplines such as English, mass communications, history, and political science among others. The most frequently listed type of research project was the research paper followed by the research presentation which included an additional component such as a visual aid or speech.

A majority of respondents indicated they have used the skills learned in LIS 1001 in other courses and such skills included database searching, advanced searching techniques (e.g., Boolean Operators, truncation, subject terms, etc.), and navigating the physical library building. On the other hand, few respondents specified the use of the Internet or the Libraries’ website as a skill set used in other courses.

Survey results also indicate that a majority of students did not have any difficulty when utilizing skills learned in LIS 1001. Even so, specific obstacles were listed by some respondents. Students stated that information literacy skills were forgotten and therefore couldn't be used in later years of study. Also respondents were frustrated with the search process indicating not only the inability to produce an adequate search statement but also the complexity of using multiple databases with differing user interfaces, content, and search limiters.

Since the LIS 1001 course instructors share a common course outline upon which to build their courses, many of the library and information resources demonstrated in the course are common to all of the LIS 1001 sections. Similar to the survey responses regarding the LIS 1001 *skills* used in other courses, a majority of respondents also indicated the use of *resources* taught in LIS 1001 in other courses. Not surprisingly, the two resources used most by respondents were the indexes and databases and the library catalog. Also, paralleling responses regarding the use of LIS 1001 skills used in other courses, a majority of students did not have difficulty using information resources taught in LIS 1001. However, those students that did report difficulties with library and information resources struggled with their use of keywords and search strategies as well as finding relevant resources. The authors tried, in the survey, to distinguish skills and techniques, such as Boolean searching, from resources, such as databases. Despite the researchers' best effort, the students seemed not to heed those distinctions and casually confused them, making their responses somewhat difficult to decipher.

Regarding the types of information they were looking for, students were inclined to provide specific research topics. The research topics were wide-ranging and reflected the general interests and curriculum of the campus (e.g., health communication and racial disparities, stem-cell research, genetically modified crops, the green revolution, etc.). However, students also

indicated a significant use of scholarly and popular periodical articles (more so than any other type of information document) in this category. Regardless of whether the type of information was listed as a research topic or document type, a majority of students assessed themselves as ultimately successful in finding the information needed for their courses.

Almost one-third of the respondents indicated they used LIS 1001 skills (such as the library catalog and indexes and databases) outside of the classroom in day-to-day activities, leaving over two-thirds of respondents who did not think they used any LIS 1001 skills in their lives outside of the classroom. Similarly, the responses for the use of any information resources learned in LIS 1001 in an area of life outside of the classroom was also around one-third, with the library catalog and indexes and databases listed as the most used resources. The survey results indicated that students did not have difficulty in using LIS 1001 skills or resources for anything unrelated to their classes.

The survey instrument focused on students who had completed an information literacy credit-bearing course at a specific research extensive university. Since the questions were tailored to this group and the sample population was self-selected based on the option to participate, certain limitations to the study occurred. Despite these limitations, each section of the survey instrument and the data provided have potential for further research and exploration, which will now be considered.

Future Research

The study conducted provided the authors the information they were seeking; now they know that LIS 1001 does, in fact, have the hoped-for spill-over effect. However, there are other data the study did not collect, which would complete the picture of the effects of information

literacy instruction. It would be interesting, for example, to gauge the difference between students' impressions of their IL competence with their actual competence as measured by a strenuous post-test, as was done by some researchers. Likewise, it would be interesting to correlate the grades students earned in LIS 1001 with their post-course usage of the skills they were taught. In other words, are the students using the skills post-course primarily those who earned the higher grades in the course? It might also be telling to correlate grade point averages and participation in LIS 1001. Stepping back from these empirical measures, it would be nice to know if students felt the library skills course had a positive impact on their grades overall as well as in particular courses.

The placement and timing of information literacy instruction are other points of concern in the effort to teach students to be wise information consumers. Should the instruction remain as a stand-alone course, or should it be grafted to a subject course, such as history or political science, and should it be taught to students in their first two semesters or later, after they have acquired a more serious attitude about their studies?

Some study results were curiously noteworthy and beg further investigation. For example, the authors noted that "evaluation" of information sources was not mentioned at all as a skill the students used. Why not? It is possible, such skill functions so far and unconsciously in the background, they are not even aware. On the other hand, it may be that the teaching of evaluation needs to be emphasized more.

The researchers also noted that only eighty-three percent of respondents acknowledged having to do some sort of research project. This seems an impressive statistic, but it raises the question why isn't this number one hundred percent, inasmuch as freshman English, a course all students are required to take, assigns a research project.

The fact the LexisNexis Academic was the most-used database also stood out. The researchers were left to wonder why such a non-scholarly database would be more used than any other, in view of the academic context of the research assignments. Perhaps the students are uncomfortable using scholarly journals. Then again, perhaps the answer is to be found in the requirements of the assignments themselves.

Conclusion

The LIS 1001 course is always under review. The results of this survey certainly suggest some things about the course that should be looked at. If the students are ever going to be discerning information consumers, they must be able to evaluate the information they find, and it seems, from the survey results, there might need to be an increased emphasis on teaching evaluation as a practical and useful skill.

The assessments of other institutions, summarized above, vary in many ways from the instant survey and from each other. And while, in some instances, the instruction being evaluated took the form of a stand-alone course and, in others, that of integrated instruction, all assessments are connected by the common thread of longevity. All researchers sought to fathom the staying power of their teaching. The good news is that in no case was it found the students cast aside their information literacy lessons once they'd finished the course.

The authors were, naturally, gratified to learn that LIS 1001 students have taken instruction in the use of library resources to heart. The fact that so many are using the skills and the resources taught to them is something of a vindication of the effort and thought poured into the course.

In terms of evaluating the library instruction program in all its aspects, however, there is

clearly much more to do. Acquisition of new knowledge “is complex and multidimensional and any serious attempt to assess learning must take a multi-methods approach” (Lindauer 2004, 122). This survey was merely a snap-shot of one individual member in the family of program assessment. Perhaps the next assessment will be more of a family portrait.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS

2147 email invitations

326 completes

Not all percentages equal 100 because respondents could provide multiple answers.

LIS1001 Assessment Survey

Demographics

1. Your gender:

Male	83	26%
Female	242	74%
Other	0	0

2. Your current academic status:

Freshman	1	0%
Sophomore	47	14%
Junior	101	32%
Senior	141	44%
Graduate Student	32	10%

3. In which semester and year (e.g., Fall 2008) did you take LIS 1001?

Spring 2009	75	21%
Fall 2008	90	25%
Summer 2008	5	1%
Spring 2008	45	12%
Fall 2007	60	17%
Spring 2007	32	9%
Fall 2006	39	11%
Other	15	4%

4. You took LIS 1001:

Online	155	48%
In the classroom	169	52%

5. Are you a Mass Comm or Comm Studies major?

Yes	147	45%
No	278	55%

Applications in classes other than LIS 1001

6. Since taking (or, while taking) LIS 1001, have you had (or, did you have) any research projects (e.g., papers, reports, or presentations) for other classes?

Yes	271	83%
No	55	17%

7. In which class or classes were these projects assigned?

Mass Communication	86	30%
English	96	34%
Political Science	19	7%
History	16	6%
Communication Studies	16	6%
Human Ecology	13	5%
Sociology	12	4%
Kinesiology	11	4%
Education	11	4%
Business	10	4%
Psychology	10	4%
Honors	9	3%
Philosophy	7	3%
Art	7	3%
Engineering	4	1%
Renewable Resources	4	1%
All or Most Classes	9	3%
NA or None	18	6%
Other	16	6%

8. Please describe the project(s).

Research Paper	154	55%
Research Project	37	13%
Research Presentation	41	15%
Critical Analysis	13	5%
Public Relations Campaign	7	3%
Case Study	7	3%
Research Survey	6	2%
Market Research	5	2%
Literature Review	4	1%
NA or None	16	6%
Specific Topics – Miscellaneous	28	10%
Other	8	3%

9. Did you use any of the skills (e.g., Boolean searching) you learned about in LIS 1001?

Yes	247	76%
No	78	24%

10. Please list the skills you used.

Database searching	134	53%
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Boolean and other searching techniques	70	28%
Navigating the stacks	39	15%
Library's Website	23	9%
Internet searching	21	8%
Evaluation	7	3%
Unspecific Responses	48	19%
NA or None	16	6%
Other	10	4%

*Unspecific Responses were mostly "research" or "search skills"

11. Please explain any difficulty you encountered when using those skills.

Forgot Skills	26	12%
Narrowing Searches	20	10%
Locating Material	15	7%
Database Difficulty	10	5%
Little Difficulty	18	9%
NA or None	144	68%

12. Did you use any of the information resources (e.g., the online catalog, LexisNexis, etc.) you learned about in LIS 1001?

Yes	257	79%
No	69	21%

13. Please list the information resources you used.

Indexes and Databases	196	73%
Library Catalog	98	37%
Search Engines	8	3%
NA or None	14	5%
Other	20	8%

14. Please explain any difficulty you encountered when using those resources.

Finding Relevant Resources	19	9%
Search Words and Strategy	22	10%
Forgot Skills	15	7%
Finding Full Text	5	2%
IT/Tech Problems	6	3%
NA or None	129	61%
Other	22	10%

15. Describe what information you were looking for.

Articles	84	34%
Books	18	7%
Journals	16	7%
Statistics	13	5%
Literary Criticism	7	3%
Specific Topics – Miscellaneous	95	39%

Unspecific Responses	34	14%
NA or None	15	6%
Other	3	1%

*Unspecific responses were mostly “information” or “research”

16. Were you ultimately successful in finding the information you were looking for?

Yes	293	93%
No	22	7%

Applications outside of academic classes

17. Have you used any of the skills you learned about in LIS 1001 for anything unrelated to your classes? (e.g., finding a book for leisure reading, gathering facts concerning a health issue)

Yes	102	32%
No	221	68%

18. Please list those skills.

Library Catalog	45	28%
Indexes and Databases	18	11%
Boolean Operators	12	8%
Internet	5	3%
NA or None	37	23%
Other	21	13%

19. Was it difficult or problematic for you to use those skills?

Yes	7	2%
No	280	98%

20. Please explain any difficulty you encountered.

Finding Physical Material	3	3%
Not Enough Practice	3	3%
Forgot Skills	1	1%
Narrowing Search	1	1%
LC Confusion	1	1%
NA or None	102	90%
Other	4	4%

21. Have you used any of the information resources you learned about in LIS 1001 for anything unrelated to your classes? (e.g., a database, the online catalog, the library web site)

Yes	113	35%
No	211	65%

22. Please list those information resources you used.

Indexes and Databases	39	25%
Library Catalog	48	31%

Library Website	30	19%
NA or None	60	39%
Other	8	5%

23. Was it difficult or problematic for you to use those resources?

Yes	5	2%
No	292	98%

24. Please explain any difficulty you encountered.

Webpage navigation	1	1%
Remote access	1	1%
Forgot skills	1	1%
NA or None	93	92%
Other	2	2%

25. Were you ultimately successful in finding the information you were looking for?

Yes	209	74%
No	75	26%

26. What information were you trying to find?

Library-related Inquiries	13	8%
Leisure Reading	16	10%
Specific Topics – Miscellaneous	58	36%
Unspecific Responses	55	34%
NA or None	52	32%

*Unspecific responses were “books”, “topics”, “information”

27. Please provide any additional comments related to this survey.

Favorable remarks	78	62%
Unfavorable remarks	10	8%
Irrelevant remarks	11	9%
NA or None	27	21%

28. Please provide the optional contact information if you want to be entered in a drawing for one of two \$20 Barnes and Noble gift cards.

APPENDIX B: COMMON COURSE OUTLINE

Online catalog

- Basic search
- Advanced search
- Electronic books

Classification systems

- Subject-based
- Agency based

Search strategies

- Boolean searching
- Subject headings (and controlled vocabulary)

Periodicals

- Definition of periodicals
- Periodical citations vs. book citations
- How to find the text of articles from full periodical citations
- Periodical holdings statements in catalog records
- Scholarly vs. popular periodicals

Periodical databases

- Academic Search Complete
 - How to find full periodical citations from incomplete citations
 - Controlled vocabulary in periodical databases
- LexisNexis
- Web of Science

Reference sources

Evaluating information

- Primary vs. secondary sources
- Scholarly vs. popular sources

Government information

Note: The order of presentation of these topics and the emphasis placed on each is at the instructor's discretion.

Optional topics

- Library home page
- Internet
- Library tour
- Citation format
- Statistical information
- Special Collections tour
- The Information Cycle
- Research plans
- Webfeat
- CQ Researcher
- Ethical use of information

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