Better Beginnings: The Link between a Library Skills Class and Student Success Rates

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BETTER BEGINNINGS: The link between a library skills class and student success rates

Jean Cook
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• Part of the University System of Georgia
  – Fall under the USG Board of Regents
    • Shared core curriculum
    • Easy to transfer within state
    • Push to increase RPG rates

• Robust tier
  – Master’s + PhD programs
  – Undergraduate research

• Full Time Enrollment:
  – 5800 in 1999 to 8300 in 2008 to about 11,000 in 2011
LIBR 1101

• developed as elective credit course
  – 1 credit hour for 1 quarter (10 weeks)
• In Fall 1998, entered UWG’s Core Area B
  – 2 credit hours for 1 semester (15 weeks)

• taught by Instruction Services librarians
  – has been taught by adjuncts and tech services

• Students will:
  – understand intellectual org of info sources and the consequences of that org in accessing info
  – identify functional areas of the library and understand their significance in research process
  – recognize various types of info source and the appropriate use of the different types of info sources
  – access, evaluate, and select research materials
  – learn how to record and store information
  – learn the principles of proper documentation
  – principles and techniques of e-communication via internet
  – competent in the use of Ingram Library and its resources
Learning Outcomes (2008-now)

• Students will be able to:
  – Analyze and articulate the info need and identify appropriate sources of info to meet that need.
  – Understand the intellectual org of information sources and apply that understanding in accessing information.
  – Effectively and efficiently access, evaluate, select and use needed information.
  – Demonstrate an understanding of the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information.
  – Identify functional areas of a library (both physical and virtual) and demonstrate their relationship to the research process.
  – Create a research product that incorporates appropriate information and research methodology.
Populations

- Based on Board of Regent’s measures

First Time, Full Time Freshman

LIBR 1101

Made ABC in class

No LIBR 1101

Made DFW or other
Populations

• We did not consider:
  – non-traditional or returning students
  – part-time students
  – students who began in spring or summer semesters
  – students who transferred to UWG
## Populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total FTFT students</th>
<th>Students who took LIBR 1101</th>
<th>Students who made an ABC</th>
<th># of Sections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1598</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>7 f2f, 3 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1657</td>
<td>376</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>7 f2f, 7 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>1557</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>4 f2f, 19 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>1625</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>2 f2f, 27 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1728</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>0 f2f, 32 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1701</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2 f2f, 28 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1653</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>4 f2f, 17 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1700</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>2 f2f, 16 online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>13,219</td>
<td>2,628</td>
<td>1,815</td>
<td>28 f2f, 149 online</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Delivery Methods of Class

1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006

Online

F-2-F
Proportions of FTFT Students in Study

Class-Other
Class-ABC
Not In Class
Graduation Rates Significance Tests

• Pearson Chi-Square Test for Independence
• At the 5% level of significance,
  – taking LIBR 1101 and graduating in 4 years are not independent 7 out of 8 years
  – taking LIBR 1101 and graduating in 5 years are not independent 7 out of 7 years
  – taking LIBR 1101 and graduating in 6 years are not independent 6 out of 6 years
Prediction Tests

• Course is self-selected.
• Based on standard predictors for student success, would researchers expect that LIBR 1101 students to fare better?
ACT

[Graph showing ACT scores from 1999 to 2006 for different classes: No Class, Class, Class-ABC, Class-Other.]
High School GPAs

![Graph showing GPAs from 1999 to 2006 for different classes: All FTFT, No Class, Class, Class-ABC, Class-Other.](image-url)
Predictor Significance Tests

• One tailed z-test
• At the 5% level of significance,
  – LIBR 1101 students did not score higher on the SATM, SATV, and ACT tests 8 out of 8 years.
  – LIBR 1101 students did score higher HS GPAs 5 out of 8 years than students not in the class.
College Graduation GPAs

Includes all graduates from each class as of Summer 2010 (4432 total)
Graduation GPA Significance Tests

• Considers only 4432 students who started in 1999 – 2006 and graduated by Summer 2010
• One tailed z-test
• At the 5% level of significance,
  – LIBR 1101 students averaged significantly lower graduation GPAs 3 out of 8 years than students not in the class.
Lower GPAs? Not really

• Average HS GPA:
  – Students with LIBR 1101: 3.01
  – Students without LIBR 1101: 2.96

• Average Graduation GPA:
  – Students with LIBR 1101: 3.03
  – Students without LIBR 1101: 3.09

• Graduation Rates:
  – Students with LIBR 1101: 1429 of 2628 (54%)
  – Students without LIBR 1101: 3003 of 10591 (28%)
## Total Graduation Rates

Students who started between 1999 and 2006 and graduated by Summer 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Students</th>
<th>No class</th>
<th>No class Grad</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Class Grad</th>
<th>Class-ABC</th>
<th>ABC Grad</th>
<th>Class-Other</th>
<th>Other Grad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10591</td>
<td>3003</td>
<td>2628</td>
<td>1429</td>
<td>1815</td>
<td>1155</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Graduation Rate</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Graduate GPA</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

• There is a significant correlation between the students who took the course and student graduation rates.
• This correlation is even stronger for students who passed the course.
• To pass the course, students must be able to demonstrate the basics tenets of academic research and information literacy.
• BUT! Correlation ≠ Causation
Suggestions for further study

• Supplemental qualitative studies
• Effects of class on specific students
• Online versus face-to-face sections
• Normalize for other contributing factors
  – gender, first gen students, HS GPAs, etc.
• Similar studies for effects on one-shots
  – Sections with BI sessions, sections without BI
• Look at grades in ENGL, major courses
Further Reading

• “What Are They Learning? Pre- And Post-Assessment Surveys for LIBR 1100, Introduction to Library Research.” *College & Research Libraries* March 2010

• “Assessment of The Lasting Effects of a Stand-Alone Information Literacy Course: the student perspectives.” *Journal Of Academic Librarianship* July 2011
Data-based Library RPG Studies

• “The Academic Library Impact on Student Persistence.” *College and Research Libraries* March 2011

• “Measuring Association between Library Instruction and Graduation GPA” *College and Research Libraries* September 2011

• “First-Year Programs and Information Literacy” sc.edu/fye/events/presentation/annual/2008/download/184-CI.ppt
Questions?

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