Now that competencies for information literacy are widely communicated in higher education, including in Art and Design, assessing student learning of the standards is the next step in fully incorporating information literacy in the discipline. A recent investigation at San Jose State University of students’ ability to analyze citations illustrates that students need practice in identifying types of sources, and that this practice can be effectively delivered through brief active learning activities.

Purpose of the investigation:
The locally developed online assessment tool (Web Based Information Literacy Assessment Tool) was initially created to measure the progress of student learning resulting from in-person instruction sessions provided for junior level writing courses, 100W. Across all majors at SJSU, this class is a graduation requirement and often the course in the major that is the site for subject specific library instruction.

Questions at the reference desk and consultations provided anecdotal evidence that students often did not know what citations represented. Therefore, a question on citation identification and an in-class activity were created to specifically address this concept.

The data displayed on the poster represents the pre and post assessment scores for three sections of Art 100W. This data was gathered in Spring 2009. Results from the question (Question One) testing knowledge of citation identification indicate that the in-class activity resulted in a greater number of students being able to correctly identify the type of source represented in a citation.

Current status of the investigation:
The same six question pre- and post-assessment was administered to four sections of Art 100W in Spring 2010. The in-class activity on citation identification was expanded to include practice with identifying items from a bibliography specific to the individual class’ topic, i.e. graphic novels, and the Arts and Crafts Movement. In Spring 2010, students again scored higher on the post test of Question One than the pre test. Preliminary analysis of the overall data indicates that students score higher on questions that test their knowledge of resources and services but lower on questions that test their knowledge of how to select a source or refine a search strategy.

Future of the investigation:
One of the drawbacks to the current implementation is that the students who complete the pre test do not always complete the post test, so administration of the test needs to be reconsidered. The results of the study also indicate that students need additional practice over the course of a semester in developing their skills in selecting databases and creating effective searches. The data will be used in conjunction with faculty in the School of Art and Design to identify opportunities across the curriculum for introduction and repetition of information literacy concepts.

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