From Assessment to Implementation: Using Qualitative Interviews to Inform Distance Learning Services

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Extended Campus & Distance Services Librarian
Introduction

- Extended Campus & Distance Services Librarian position created in 2014
- Wanted to develop customized services for diverse population – but where to start?
Planning the Assessment

• Choosing the best assessment strategy
• Creating relationships around the institution
FSU Overview

Over 32,000 FTE with several undergraduate, graduate and certificate programs that can be completed online.
Literature Review

• Strategic assessment planning for distance services
• Qualitative inquiries
• Goals
Purpose & Design of Study

• Used previous FSU library studies
• Convenience sampling with help from Office of Distance Learning
• Gauging overall distance learning perception of the library
Questions

• What is your major/minor? (students); What is your academic department? (faculty)
• How many classes are you currently taking online vs. traditional or hybrid (face-to-face time with online component) classes? How about in past semesters? (students); How many classes are you currently teaching online vs. traditional or hybrid (face-to-face time with online component) classes? How about in past semesters? (faculty)
• How far do you live from the main FSU Campus in Tallahassee?
• How often do you use the library's online resources including the library's website?
• Which library resources or services do you use?
• How often do you use the physical libraries?
• What aspects of the library are you most satisfied with as a distance learner/online instructor?
• What aspects of the library are you least satisfied with as a distance learner/online instructor? What library services and/or resources are most important to you?
• What sort of improvements could the library make to support distance learning?
Why Qualitative Interviews?

• Overlooked methodology
• Frame as informal conversations
• Increased willingness to participate
• Creating connections
Findings & Analysis

• Modified systematic text condensation method
• Six codes (themes) identified throughout the transcripts – read paper for more information
Databases & Scholarly Journals

• Defined library relationship
• Overall happy with experiences
• “…happy with the amount of articles and journals…”
• “…found it easy to find scholarly articles…”
Library Website

• Almost half of participants identified website as area in need of improvement
• “Hard to navigate”, “not user friendly”, “logging in is still a hurdle”
• Experienced faculty felt overwhelmed with website
• Compliments on chat feature, search process
Videos and Tutorials

• Should “anticipate questions that students don’t want to ask”
• Faculty saw this as major role of the library
LMS Integration

• Faculty saw integration imperative in making the library relevant
• Outreach and embedding purposes
• Engaging in active relationships
Outreach

• Proactive efforts
• Faculty “don’t go looking for the library”
• Improved communication
Embedded Librarian

• Embedded in pedagogy, research process vs. embedded in course site

• “...keeping students surrounded by library information” in online environment
Does everyone need the library?

• A few participants stated that library was not necessary for their discipline – is this important?
Implementation
Office of Distance Learning

• Improved Office of Distance Learning required orientation to library video
• Invited to faculty workshop series
• Blackboard integration
• Continuing assessment opportunities
Website

• Short-term: created new distance learning pages on website; took lead on virtual reference service
• Long-term: work with web development team to improve overall usability
Videos & Tutorials

• Created collection of videos and tutorials
• New staff position for distance learning with focus on media creation
• Focused on organizational training
How to Make a Video Tutorial
Subject Librarian Support

• Subject librarians embedded in departments
• Training and support to increase distance support initiatives with individual librarians
Personal Librarian

• Importance of one-on-one contact for online students

• Qualitative methodology benefits for planning distance services
Looking Forward

• Ongoing assessment
• Implemented within six months after assessment
• Aligning goals – with campus partners, strategic initiatives