A Librarian Logs Into an Online Course: The Impact of a Librarian Facilitator on Distance Student Research Skills

Jamie Dwyer, MLS
Library of the Health Sciences – Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago

1. Increase Use of Resources

Methods: Use statistics were collected for Research Guides related to these programs from the LibGuides 2.0 platform.

Number of Guide Views by Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>5243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>8075</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biomedical & Health Informatics (BHI), Health Information Management, & Biomedical Visualization


Limit: Research guide views are not the same as library resource use.

2. Faculty Perceptions of Student Research Skills

Methods: An online survey administered using Qualtrics was emailed to all BHIS faculty and adjunct professors in October, 2015. Sixty-nine (69) invites were sent; 16 faculty teaching HI courses responded to the survey.

Since January, 2014 have you noticed any changes in student research skills?

"Students are using Google and websites as primary sources, APA attribution and citation skills trending down, less critical thinking and interpretation of sources and increased summarization."

"I believe students have got the basics right, finally: with a few exceptions, they tend to be comfortable identifying the right sources and citing these in APA style. It gets much harder when they need to analyze and summarize these sources."

Importance of Research Skills

These charts represent faculty responses when asked how important each skill was in the HI courses they teach, in the HI program as a whole, and in the post-HI degree workplace.

Limitations: Reliance on faculty opinions of student research skills and recall comparing to skills before 2014; faculty relationships with the liaison librarian may impact their responses.

3. Build a Following

Methods: The librarian’s liaison activities were analyzed for interactions with the BHIS Department:

- Weekly office hours (3) in BHIS Department
- Average 1.5 contacts per hour
- Involvement developing curriculum & pursuing training grant for the new PhD in BHI Program
- Invitations to BHIS holiday lunches

Discussion

1. Steady increase of research guide views implies that exposure in the course is raising students’ awareness and use of these resources in future courses.

2. Faculty perceptions vary based on individual course requirements and assignments. Course revisions may have caused perceived changes since 2014.

3. BHIS 499 was not the only departmental involvement; other activities helped build relationships.

Is it worthwhile?

Managing this course load along with liaison and tenure track responsibilities is difficult. Compensation acknowledges the elevated role in the course.

Future Directions

Student Assessment & Engagement
- Pre- and post- assessment measuring BHIS 499 student confidence with research skills and basic research skill knowledge
- Examine responses from library student survey
- Expand to offer online office hours

Collaboration with BHIS Faculty
- Curriculum mapping to professional standards & program outcomes
- Annual perception of student research skills survey
- Continue revising BHIS 499 course

References