Now You See Me, Now You Don’t: Moving a Large-scale Library Instruction Session from In-person to Online

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The Question
Is online library instruction as effective as in-person library instruction?

Recent Research

“...a new study to assess the effectiveness of online library instruction in face-to-face courses in comparison to [a] hybrid model...”


“...compares the effectiveness of online versus in-person library instruction.”

Recent Empirical Findings
“Blends of online and face-to-face instruction...had stronger learning outcomes than did face-to-face instruction alone.”

“...students in the online learning condition were more successful at [the library instruction task] than those in the face-to-face condition.”

Now You See Me...  (Prior to Fall of 2016)
98% WHO ATTENDED IN-PERSON LIBRARY INSTRUCTION SESSIONS PASSED A QUIZ AND RECEIVED RESEARCH CREDITS FOR PSYC1101.

In Practice: Are GSU introductory psychology students who take online library instruction sessions as successful as students who took the same sessions in-person in previous semesters?

Now You Don’t.  (Since Fall of 2016)
95% WHO TOOK ONLINE LIBRARY INSTRUCTION SESSIONS PASSED A QUIZ AND RECEIVED RESEARCH CREDITS FOR PSYC1101.

Methods: In-person vs. Online Instruction

In-person Spring 2012 to Fall 2016: Students attended an in-person instruction session in the library and completed an assessment (quiz) immediately following the instruction session.

Online (since the Fall of 2016): Students sign up for an online instruction session and are allowed 48 hours from a certain date and time to go through the self-paced online instruction session, which has a built-in assessment (quiz).

Note: PSYC1101 students at GSU are required to earn 6 “research credits” outside of class. Three library instruction sessions are worth 1 research credit each.

Discussion, Limitations, & Conclusions
3% drop in successful attainment of credits could be due to 1) students not able to ask questions prior to quiz, 2) non-invested students simply trying a number of online options to earn credits, and 3) slight changes in content and questions when the sessions moved to online only.

Data for in-person instruction is based on nine semesters; data for online instruction is based on only four semesters. More data is needed to make a true comparison of effectiveness.

In conclusion, 95% is still a very high success rate for attainment of library instruction research credits and is evidence of effective online-only instruction.

Online Instruction Improvement
• To improve scores and student learning:
  • Don’t change the content of the online tutorials. Change the design.
  • To improve the online tutorials:
    • Conduct focus-groups or incorporate a feedback option in the current online tutorials.

Future Research
• What are student vs. professor preferences for delivery of library instruction? Explore this in the context of student-centered teaching.
• Explore this same phenomenon with PSYC3530 library instruction – which is currently in the process of going from a hybrid model to online only.