Online Assessment of Information Competence

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Information Competence @ CSUN

- CSUN's General Education IC outcome:
  - "Students will progressively acquire information competence skills by developing an understanding of information retrieval tools and practices as well as improving their ability to evaluate and synthesize information ethically."
- Students must take two IC-designated courses, one in the Basic Skills and one in Subject Explorations.

Information Competence & UNIV 100

- UNIV 100 Freshman Seminar is an IC-designated course in the Lifelong Learning Area of GE.
- UNIV 100 SLO #9: "Find, evaluate, and use appropriate print and electronic information to complete class assignments."
- Librarians provide a week of hands-on library instruction covering the basics of IC.
- Students do a library research assignment, such as an annotated bibliography, which is graded by the course instructor.

UNIV 100 IC Assessment Methodology

- Assessment consists of an online, multiple-choice pretest and posttest

- Questions are based on the Association of College and Research Libraries' <u>Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education</u>

- Use Flashlight Online™, the Web-based survey software from the CTLT at Washington State University (CSUN has a site license).

- Fall 2008 semester, 820 freshmen enrolled in all 34 sections of University 100 were asked to take the pretest at the beginning of the semester and the posttest at the end of the semester.

- As an incentive to complete the surveys, students were given participation credit by course instructors.

- Results were aggregated.

UNIV 100 Information Competence Assessment Results, Fall 2008			
	Pretest	Posttest	% Change
Competency Tested	% Correct	% Correct	+/-
Choose the most scholarly source	45.5	78.8	33.3
Identify elements needed for a citation	49.3	67.1	17.8
Identify a scholarly journal	35.1	46.1	11.0
Critical thinking: Recognize potential bias	52.5	63.0	10.5
Know that the Boolean "and" narrows a search	63.0	70.6	7.6
Understand when to refine a topic	57.0	62.5	5.5
Know to use the catalog to identify books	86.1	91.5	5.4
Recognize an article citation	32.2	36.6	4.4
Critical thinking: evaluating Internet resources	74.1	77.8	3.7
Know why to use a periodical database	41.4	44.3	2.9
Understanding plagiarism	86.4	89.3	2.9
Recognize a book citation	51.1	51.7	0.6
Identify keywords from a topic statement	46.0	46.1	0.1
Choose the most up-to-date news source	73.8	60.8	-13.0
Average Percent:	56.7	63.3	6.6

Discussion

- UNIV 100 students have limited IC skills coming into CSUN
- Test results improve pretest to posttest after library instruction, but perhaps not enough
- Since 2003, pretest to posttest data consistent, despite changes to IC instruction program
- Should we use a different instrument?

Web-based, Forced-Choice Surveys for Assessment

- Pros
  - Easy to distribute to large population
  - Easy for students to take (anytime, anywhere)
  - Easy to "grade"
  - Easy to quantify the data

- Cons
  - Requires some Web skills
  - ADA issues
  - Not performance-based
  - Artificial vs. authentic assessment
  - Can't assess higher order skills such as critical thinking

Breakout

1. Individual activity:
   a. Can you pass the UNIV 100 IC test?
   b. Share whether you think it is a good assessment instrument or not.
2. Think/Pair/Share activity:
   a. Read the assessment types handout, and think about which instrument(s) you would recommend for future IC assessment projects and why.
   b. Discuss your ideas with the person next to you.
   c. Share with the group.

Questions?

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