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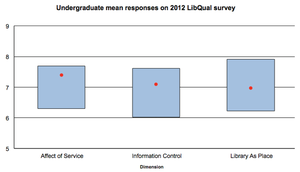
WRITE TOGETHER: ASSESSING WRITING CENTER DATA FOR LIBRARY COLLABORATION

Heidi Gauder, Coordinator of Research & Instruction • Hector Escobar, Director of Education & Information Delivery • Roesch Library, University of Dayton

BACKGROUND: it started with data

- LibQUAL+ national survey (2008, 2012)
- Library floor counts
- Transaction data from library service desks



WHAT WE LEARNED FROM THE DATA

- Students wanted more library study spaces
- At the same time, other study spaces underutilized
- Students had trouble finding the writing center
- Library research services were also underutilized

THE MOVE FORWARD

SPRING 2013: Library approached the writing center to form a partnership involving a shared common space and integrated services.

SPRING 2014: Project approved. Funding sources: the University Libraries, the Provost, and the Learning Teaching Center approved

FALL 2014: Renovation of the Knowledge Hub complete. Research and writing services open.

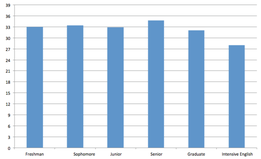
UNDERSTANDING THE WORK OF WRITING CENTERS: an analysis

PURPOSE

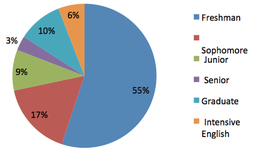
- What help does a writing center provide? Who does the writing center serve?
- What does this information mean for an integrated service approach?
- More specifically, how do writing centers address the evaluation, integration and attribution of sources?

METHODOLOGY

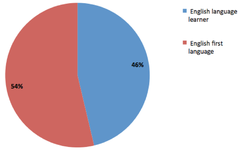
- Analyzed 1,200 writing center consultant reports for Fall 2013.
- 80% of all face-to-face consultations
- Reports transcribed & coded for analysis
- Elements included class rank, language ability, course information, date, time, and areas of help.



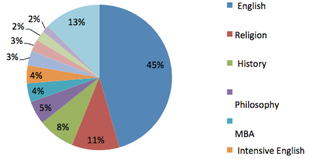
Consultations ran roughly same length of time — 30 minutes — regardless of class rank.



First-year students largest group seeking help at writing center.



Disproportionate use of writing center by international students.



Students seeking writing assistance mostly for work related to their English courses.

ASSESSMENT: preparation and planning

TRAINING: SKILLED STUDENT EMPLOYEES CRITICAL

- Online tutorial for library student employees.
- Cross-training simulation for writing center service desk student employees to learn library tasks.
- Library skills and values document shared with writing center employees.
- Writing consultant survey about perceptions of librarians, follow-up discussion.
- Training simulation for writing consultants with text artifacts in order to recognize weak research efforts. Evaluated with rubric tool.

	No/Limited Proficiency	Some Proficiency	Proficiency	High Proficiency	(Rating)
Support/Reasoning (a) Ideas (b) Details ACRL Information Literacy Standard 3	Offers simplistic, undeveloped, or cryptic support for the ideas. Inappropriate or off-topic generalizations, faulty assumptions, errors of fact	Offers somewhat obvious support that may be too broad. Details are too general, not interpreted, irrelevant to thesis, or inappropriately repetitive	Offers solid but less original reasoning. Assumptions are not always recognized or made explicit. Contains some appropriate details or examples	Substantial, logical, & concrete development of ideas. Assumptions are made explicit. Details are germane, original, and convincingly interpreted	
Evidence/ Documentation ACRL Information Literacy Standard 3	Evidence does not come from credible sources, making the paper unconvincing	Evidence is a mix of reliable and unreliable sources, making the paper less than convincing.	Claims are mostly supported by valid, reliable evidence from credible sources, making the paper for the most part convincing.	Claims are supported by reliable, valid evidence from credible sources and effectively synthesized in a very convincing manner.	

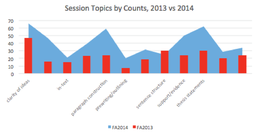
MORE WORK AHEAD

- Analyze Fall 2014 consultant reports
- Develop series of workshops with writing center. Possible topics: brainstorming for writing and research, sources for rhetorical situation, documenting and citing sources.
- Work on aligning data collection practices with writing center: are we serving the same or different students?
- Continue "knitting together" two work cultures and values

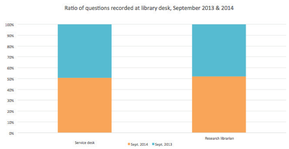
ASSESSMENT: HOW WILL WE JUDGE OUR EFFORTS?

- Total number of users helped. We expect the numbers to increase from previous semesters.
- Total number of cross-unit referrals. This new item will establish a baseline number.
- Total number of users in the space. We expect the numbers for the first floor as a whole to increase.
- User / client satisfaction. We want to gauge how satisfied our users are with the new service model.
- Changes in writing session content. We expect this new service model will affect the topics covered in writing consultations.

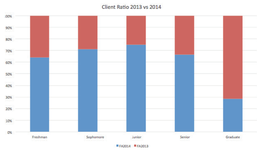
PRELIMINARY RESULTS & COMPARISONS



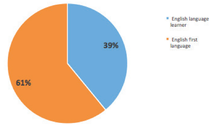
2013: Clarity of ideas, word choice and sentence structure
2014: Clarity of ideas, paragraph construction & thesis statements



2014: Library transaction numbers remain the same as in 2013



2014: More writing sessions with all undergraduates, less with graduate students than in 2013



2014: International students still use writing center in disproportionate numbers, but less than in 2013

NOTE: Writing center comparison data based on first 10 days of service, 2013 & 2014

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

The Knowledge Hub staff seek to provide writing & research support for members of UD's community in a comfortable, collaborative environment where learning can flourish. Staffed by Roesch Library research librarians and Write Place student writing consultants, the Knowledge Hub will help to empower individuals by offering easy access to the resources they need to succeed.

BENEFITS REALIZED

- Converted former writing center space to study space, increased use
- Additional first floor study space after writing & research service hours end
- Greater visibility of services
- Pilot phase: Opportunity to experiment with new approaches to service integration

http://bit.ly/IUPUI2014

KNOWLEDGE HUB
Write Place and Research Services

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