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Mind the Gap: Harmonizing Composition Instruction with Information Literacy Outcomes through Assessment of Annotated Bibliographies



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Too often librarians limit instruction assessment to modifying their own methods, when the real impediment to mastering information literacy skills is the gap between information literacy standards and the classroom assignments intended to teach them.

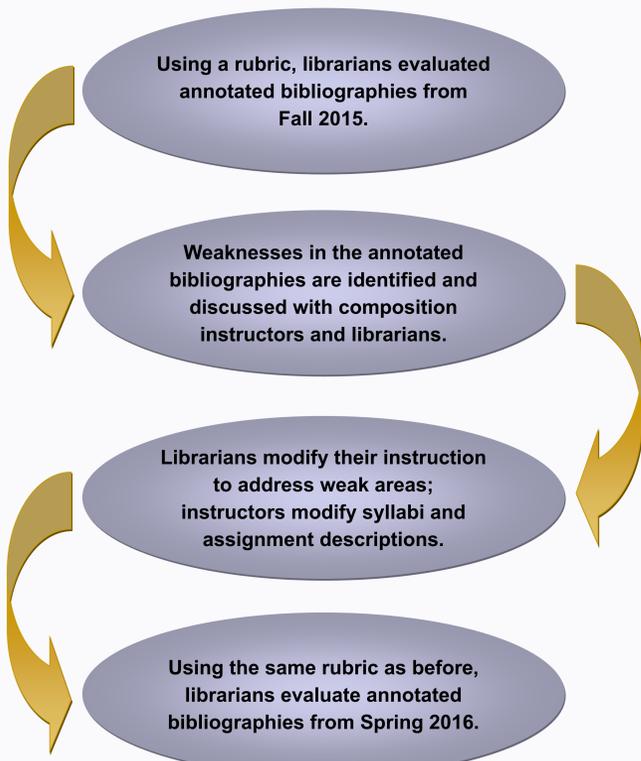
Using annotated bibliographies, librarians at Reed Library not only changed their library instruction but also used assessment results to negotiate syllabi changes, tighten assignment descriptions, and increase rigor in composition classes.

ABOUT FORT LEWIS COLLEGE



- Public, undergraduate, liberal arts college.
- Located in Durango in rural, southwest Colorado.
- Approximately 3,600 FTE students.
- 33% Native American

ABOUT THE PROCESS



OBSERVATIONS AND ACTIONS

- Students' strengths lay in selecting an appropriate number of sources and selecting sources of appropriate currency.
- Students' weaknesses included selecting an appropriate scope for their topic, constructing appropriate search strategies, selecting sources of appropriate quality and authority, and using annotations to discuss source and author credibility.
- Librarians chose to focus instructional modifications on emphasizing the proper scope of topic, constructing better search strategies by using topic-specific resources and databases, and selecting appropriate sources.
- Librarians also encouraged students to use the reference librarians for checking citations, format, and content.
- Instructors modified their syllabi and standardized their assignments using input from the library.

INSTRUCTIONAL CHANGES

LIBRARIANS

INSTRUCTORS



RESULTS

- Significant score improvement in areas of instructional emphasis (***bold and italicized below***).
- No score reductions in any category.

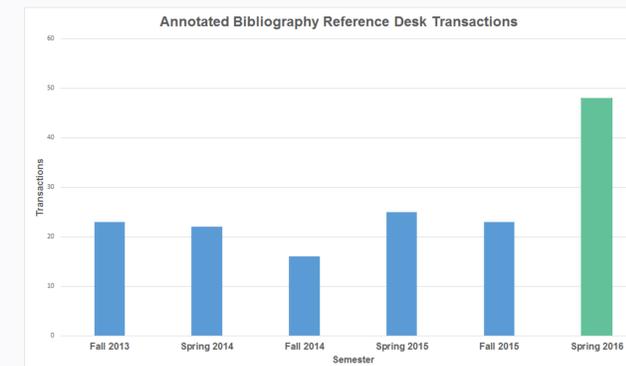
Category	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
<i>Scope of topic</i>	2.5	3.0
Number of sources	3.8	3.8
<i>Search strategy</i>	2.5	2.8
Type and variety of sources	2.7	3.1
Topically relevant sources	2.9	3.2
<i>Quality and authority of sources</i>	2.6	3.1

Category	Fall 2015	Spring 2016
Currency of sources	3.2	3.4
Annotations show understanding of content	2.9	3.0
Annotations discuss sources' credibility	2.0	2.0
Annotations discuss sources' relevance	2.7	2.8
Bibliography correctly formatted	2.7	2.7
Citations appropriately formatted	2.8	2.8

BENEFITS AND TAKEAWAYS

- Librarians must look beyond the library to improve information literacy skills, and encourage instructors to create better assignments.
- Increasing expectations on ourselves through continuous improvement of instructional methods and on students through increased rigor leads to higher quality work and greater information literacy.
- Buy-in and partnership from instructors is vital to success.
- The library needs a firm advocate to advance the process.
- Trust between the instructors and librarians create additional opportunities for future partnerships.

As an added benefit, transactions at the reference desk related to annotated bibliographies doubled over historical averages:



WHAT'S NEXT?

- Composition classes have dropped from four credits to three.
- Librarians' class time with students has been halved.
- The lost class time has been replaced by one-on-one librarian-student consultations lasting 30 minutes.
- Librarians use the consultations to tailor database and search recommendations to individual students' topics.
- Librarians discuss proper content for annotated bibliographies.
- New library guides emphasize proper annotated bibliography format and citation format.
- More assessment of annotated bibliographies after Fall 2016.