Assessment in Action Program: Four Perspectives in its Value to Librarians, Institutions and Students

Sharon Radcliff, Associate Librarian, California State University, East Bay
Stephanie Alexander, Social Sciences Librarian, California State University, East Bay
Gina Kessler Lee, Information Literacy Librarian, St. Mary’s College
Sara Davidson Squibb, Head, User Communication & Instruction, University of California, Merced
Introduction to Panelists

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Assessment in Action: History

• 2012: ACRL began AiA (Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success) as part of a National Leadership and Education Grant: $249,330

• “The grant supports the design, implementation and evaluation of a program to strengthen the competencies of librarians in campus leadership and data-informed advocacy.” (http://www.ala.org/acrl/AiA)
Why AiA?

• AiA came out of two leadership summits created as part of the IMLS Collaborative Grant which concluded:
  • “Accountability drives higher education discussions.
  • A unified approach to institutional assessment is essential.
  • Student learning and success are the primary focus of higher education assessment.
  • Academic administrators and accreditors seek evidence-based reports of measurable impact”.
To Learn More:

• Read about the summits in:

• Connect, Collaborate, and Communicate: A Report from the Value of Academic Libraries Summits

• Major goal was to select 300 libraries to participate in creating assessment projects using a team approach: Librarian team leader, faculty, Institutional Research, etc…
More Goals:

• “GOAL 1: Develop the professional competencies of librarians to document and communicate the value of their academic libraries primarily in relation to their institution’s goals for student learning and success.

• GOAL 2: Build and strengthen collaborative relationships with higher education stakeholders around the issue of library value.

• GOAL 3: Contribute to higher education assessment work by creating approaches, strategies, and practices that document the contribution of academic libraries to the overall goals and missions of their institutions.”
Timeline:

• 14 month cohort –based community learning program for reach team leader

• Projects would be developed, executed and data analyzed (if possible) within the 14 months and reported on at ALA as poster sessions.
Sample Timeline:

• Cohort One:

• June 27- July 2, 2013: Chicago, IL. Cohort 1, first full-day meeting.

• January 24-28, 2014: Philadelphia, PA. Cohort 1, second full-day meeting.

• June 26-July 1, 2014: Las Vegas, NV. Cohort 1, poster session.
Curriculum

• “Guide on the side” approach (instead of “sage on the stage”)
• Communities of practice emphasized
• “Learners work collaboratively in face-to-face sessions, webcasts, and asynchronous online environments to create, share, and build content and products
Resources to learn more about AiA projects

A Recent Special Edition of College & Research Libraries includes papers from AiA projects:

http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?cat=25

Also, here is a bibliography of other articles:

http://www.acrl.ala.org/value/?page_id=980
AiA year one: Saint Mary’s College

Saint Mary’s College was part of the first cohort: (One of 75 institutions)

Goal: Assess the effectiveness of an experimental method of teaching information literacy in English Composition classes.

As team leader I assembled a team of English faculty, librarians, and institutional research staff.

First Six Months: I was part of online cohort and participated in collaborative training at ALA; developed research plan, then turned it over to a new team leader.
Professional Impact of AiA participation:

● Positive impacts included opportunity to participate in:
  ■ Online learning community on assessment
  ■ Many webinars on various aspects of action research and assessment
  ■ Peer response on research questions
  ■ planning assessment project
  ■ literature review
  ■ instrument development
  ■ Work collaboratively with inter-department campus team

● Post project benefits:
  ■ opportunities to co-present with AiA participants
  ■ publishing AiA study in peer reviewed journal
Project Goals

- Re-evaluate the content and structure of library sessions in English Composition courses to achieve information literacy learning outcomes and support student success
- Compare effects of old model of library instruction for English 5: Argument and Research with new model employing flipped classroom and Toulmin model of argument analysis
Project Team

- Initial team leader: Sharon Radcliff
- Continuing team leader: Elise Y. Wong
- Gina Kessler Lee
- Suellen Cox
- With Composition faculty and AD of Institutional Research

For more details, see:
Context

- Saint Mary’s College of California
  - Catholic, Lasallian liberal arts college; bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programs; 3,543 FTE
  - New core curriculum implemented in 2012 with Information Evaluation and Research Practices (IERP) and Critical Thinking (CT) requirements
  - Library session(s) required in English 4 & 5 and Writing in the Disciplines
Research Questions

● Does using argument analysis lead students to achieve the IERP and CT outcomes, especially evaluating sources and avoiding “myside bias” (Perkins, 1989) better than they would after a traditional library session?

● Is flipping the classroom effective for one-shots?
Composition Learning Outcomes Assessed

(IERP = Information Evaluation & Research Practices; CT = Critical Thinking)

IERP 1
Develop search strategies and use library catalogs and databases to find relevant material

IERP 2
Critically evaluate sources

IERP 3
Evaluate and synthesize evidence for the purpose of drawing valid conclusions

IERP 4
Demonstrate academic honesty and safeguard the intellectual property of others by properly integrating and citing sources

CT 2A
Seek and identify confirming and opposing evidence relevant to one’s own hypothesis
Designing the Assessment

- English 5 Faculty Survey
- Students Take SAILS Test
- Courses Get Traditional or Experimental Library Session

Assess and Compare:
- SAILS Test
- Citation & Integration of Evidence
- Lib Session Assignments
- End-of-Semester Reflections
Two Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Library Session</th>
<th>Experimental Library Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Before:</strong></td>
<td>Pre-session homework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Keywords &amp; searching worksheet</td>
<td>• Keywords &amp; searching worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alternative viewpoints worksheet</td>
<td>• Alternative viewpoints worksheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Powerpoint walking through argument analysis</td>
<td>• Powerpoint walking through argument analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scholarly article annotated w/ argument analysis</td>
<td>• Scholarly article annotated w/ argument analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>During:</strong></td>
<td><strong>During:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing a topic</td>
<td>• Developing a topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Formulating search strategies</td>
<td>• Considering alternative viewpoints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Using databases</td>
<td>• Evaluating scholarly articles: claim, evidence, reasoning/assumptions, alternative viewpoints, rebuttal, credibility, &amp; reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evaluating sources: credibility, reliability, accuracy, &amp; bias</td>
<td>• Citing in MLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethical use of information; citing in MLA</td>
<td><strong>After:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>After:</strong></td>
<td>Post-essay reflection</td>
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Some Hurdles

- Low participation from students and faculty
- Little incentive for adjuncts and lecturers to participate
- Success of experiment was dependent on faculty cooperating with librarians and on students doing the work

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Angela-Whyte-Hurdle-Posed.jpg
Results in Brief

- Faculty preferred experimental session design and content but didn’t see big difference in essays
- Most students only skimmed or did not read the pre-session homework
- Honors section skewed the results so the traditional session students outperformed the experimental students on all LOs
- Most students used quotes/stats that backed up argument they had already formed
Results in Brief: Sources Used
Results in Brief: Rubric assessment of essays

- **Citing (IERP 4)**
  - TRAD: 2.64
  - EXP: 2.74

- **Synthesis (IERP 3)**
  - TRAD: 2.50
  - EXP: 2.68

- **Alternative views (CT 2a)**
  - TRAD: 2.79
  - EXP: 2.94

- **Evaluating (IERP 2)**
  - TRAD: 2.88
  - EXP: 2.96

- **Library sources (IERP 1)**
  - TRAD: 2.65
  - EXP: 2.83

**Scale:**
1: Beginning 2: Developing 3: Accomplished 4: Exemplary
Effects on Instruction

- Increased focus on evaluation from English 4 to English 5 using constructivist pedagogy (Benjes-Small et al., 2013)
- Toulmin model of argument analysis added to our instruction toolbox
- Increased use of flipped approach
- Consolidated instruction to increase collaboration and consistency for scaffolding purposes
Personal Reflections & Learning

- Make sure control & experimental group are equivalent
- Keep study focused
- Faculty collaboration is key
- Read student work for authentic assessment
- Realistic to expect measurable impact from 1 library session?
- Offer multiple sessions vs. outsourcing IL to faculty
Future Directions

- Repeat essay coding with new approach to evaluation
- Does Toulmin method have a place in the Writing in the Disciplines courses?
- Can Toulmin and other methods be taught by faculty outside the one-shot?

http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/3014079
References


Assessment in Action (AiA), Year 2

- Project Summary
- Benefits & Challenges
- Lessons Learned & Recommendations
- Going Forward
Impact of Collaborative Efforts

- assessing an embedded model of information literacy
- Library collaborates with Writing faculty
- Known as TRAIL - Teaching Research and Information Literacy

Think Like a Researcher!
Local AiA Team

- Team Lead +
- Librarian colleague
- Writing faculty
- Co-Director of Writing Program
- Director of Institutional Assessment
- Research Analyst
Questions to Explore

Do students who participate in a course-integrated model of library instruction

● demonstrate more developed information literacy skills in research writing than their peers?

● express the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of developing student researchers?

● demonstrate higher levels of academic achievement?
Evidence Mapped to Questions

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence Mapped to Questions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>student papers = 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAIL (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-TRAIL, library session (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-TRAIL, no library session (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student reflections = 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty observations = 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student GPA = 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAIL &amp; non-TRAIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student course grades = 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAIL &amp; non-TRAIL</td>
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</tbody>
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Results

Student Learning > Research Writing

○ Scored best in the area of source suitability
○ Scoring at higher levels than their non-TRAIL peers
Results

Student Learning > Reflections

- Scored at 70% or higher (32%)
- Made source changes between the annotated bibliography and final paper (72%)
- Indicated being more confident researchers (88.5%)

…”I used to find research boring and dull. I just google[d] whatever popped up first to get the “research” out of the way.’

“In order to think like a researcher you need to be able to consider both sides [of] an argument. As a researcher you would have to take the time and properly analyze sources when researching for an issue or specific topic.”
Results

Student Learning > Faculty Observations

Did your students in introductory writing …

● Engage with research as an ongoing process.
● Incorporate multiple viewpoints.
Results

**Student Achievement > Grades & GPA**

- TRAIL cohort = lowest of the three groups
- Course grades were not statistically significant

**Overall**

- Positive results, impact on student learning
- Yet, results were not as strong as expected
## AiA Program - Benefits & Challenges

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Professional Development</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Affiliation with ACRL</td>
<td>Sustaining Conversations &amp; Sharing Expertise</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- ✔️ Affiliation with ACRL
- ✗ Timeline
Personal Reflections & Recommendations

- **Scope**
  - keeping it manageable
- **Analysis**
  - how and why
- **Risks**
  - GPA, course grades
- **Idealistic vs. Realistic**
  - impact of curriculum
- **Collaboration vs. Control**
  - differing viewpoints
Communicating & Collaborating

- Sharing results
- Offering learning community model
- Facilitating the curriculum’s use with interested faculty
- Having conversations with participating faculty

* based on presentation at AiA by Lisa Hinchcliffe, from the work of Everett Rogers in *Diffusion of Innovations*
Assessment in Action (AiA) Year Three

Project Context

- Required Information Literacy course for Freshmen
- Upper Division: 40% native students, 60% transfer students
- Assessment of WASC Core Competency in Information Literacy
Questions to Explore

Question 1
How well are we currently supporting the information literacy skill development of transfer students?

Question 2
What can we do to help our transfer students succeed in their upper division coursework?

Photo: Flickr user jarbo (Creative Commons)
Project Team

Stephanie Alexander
Assessment Librarian, University Libraries

Sharon Radcliff
Business and Economics Librarian, University Libraries

My-Lan Huynh
Assistant Manager/Orientation Coordinator, Student Life and Leadership

Alexis Alabastro
Research Associate, Institutional Research Analysis and Decision Support (IRADS)
Outcome for AiA Project

Transfer students will effectively utilize library tools to access appropriate scholarly sources in order to succeed in upper division coursework at CSU East Bay.
Criteria

How will we know we are successful? What will be happening?

- % of transfer students who utilize library e-resources from off-campus
- % of transfer students who check-out materials from the library

Photo: Flickr user inercia (Creative Commons)
Action

What will we do to make this happen?

- Upper division course-integrated instruction (3000+ level)
- GANAS workshops
- Transfer student orientation workshops

Photo: Flickr user erozkosz (Creative Commons)
Evidence

How will we collect results? What will we observe, measure and judge?

● EZProxy use (off campus article database access)
● Library checkout use (CSUEB collection, Link+)
● GPAs
Cohort A:
New transfer student, Fall 2014

*Participated* in one of the “Actions” identified for this project

Cohort B:
New transfer student, Fall 2014

*Did not participate* in one of the “Actions” identified for this project
Cohort Comparison (in Progress)

Cohort A (Action) / Cohort B (No Action)

- EZProxy use
- Library checkouts
- GPAs
Next Step: Qualitative Assessment

● Focus Groups with Cohort B
  ○ Did not participate in the “action”

● Questions
  ○ Do they need support?
  ○ Where do they need support?
  ○ Which methods or approaches might best provide that support?
Conclusion of Year 3 Project

Poster Session at ALA Annual in Orlando

- Results of Cohort Data Analysis
- Themes from Focus Groups
- Preliminary plans for strengthening support for transfer-student information literacy development
Summing up? common themes
Questions?