A Quantitative Study of Faculty Perceptions and Use of Academic Library Services

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The ubiquitous use of the Internet, freely available information, and the shift from print to digital reading material over the past 20 years is a concern to libraries both public and academic. Many believe in the imminent demise of libraries while others are strong supporters of libraries. Within the complex ecosystem of higher education, the academic library's role is changing. Print circulation is down, but students and faculty continue to use the library space and online library services (Mantel,2011). The faculty's role is changing as well with more online courses, content creation, and the need to engage today's students. The current situation leads to the question of how can librarians partner with faculty to provide instruction? Although librarians have faculty status at many institutions, how do faculty perceive librarians for course collaborations?

Statement of the Problem

Budget cuts in education, particularly higher education, decisions on where to cut back usually lead to downsizing in nonrevenue generating departments. Libraries account for a significant portion of real estate and budget, and libraries must demonstrate their value as a student support service (Creaser, Cullen, Curtis, Darlington, Maltby, Newall& Spezi, 2014). Technology has changed the library's operational goals and daily workflow. The library is a place where students use computers and meet for group work—some libraries have now become cafes to some extent. Libraries are now offering flexible working spaces and group study areas to accommodate this trend (Mantel, 2011). Though the library provides highly specialized subject-specific databases, without library instruction, the databases may be challenging for users. Course-specific research materials are freely available via Google Scholar, YouTube, TEDx, Khan Academy to name a few, why would faculty continue to use library resources to support

their courses. The faculty have mixed feelings about librarians; some faculty invite librarians for one in-class instruction session during a semester, and others will welcome librarians in their online courses. Some faculty may think that it may not be an effective use of time to work with a librarian, while others may feel working with a librarian will contribute to student success in achieving information literacy learning objectives (ACRL, 2010, p.46). And that is the bigger picture of the problem how do librarians provide evidence of the student success because of the faculty-librarian partnerships. Librarians need to recreate their roles in the institution, and the faculty-librarian partnership is one method where librarians can contribute their skills to work with faculty to support their students in developing information literacy skills, and to create instructional material. The challenge is developing the relationship, learning what faculty need, and buy-in from faculty.

Purpose

The purpose of this quasi-experimental quantitative study will provide data about faculty use of library instructional services and will determine if indeed library instruction is helping students develop information literacy skills. The data will support the limited research about the faculty-librarian partnership. The study will take place over the course of one semester to work with faculty teaching multiple sections of the same courses online. The goal of the research is to learn about the faculty experience, the methods that work to enhance the information literacy skills of the student and provide actionable data.

Research Questions

The study will explore the effectiveness of the faculty and librarian partnership, perceived and actual use of library instructional services, differences between student

information literacy skills as assessed by the faculty. The following research questions will guide

the study.

1. Is there a significant difference in student information literacy skills when faculty partner

   with librarians to create assignments and provide support?

2. Is there a significant difference of faculty perception and use of library resources and library

   instructional services?

3. Is the librarian presence in the discussion board an effective method of instruction and

   interaction with the students?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This literature review will explore studies of the faculty and librarian partnership. There

is plenty of literature with more of a student focus presenting results of student satisfaction with

libraries, and some gaps in the literature about the other constituents the library serves especially

faculty. Literature about the current state of the academic library and the role of the academic

librarian is necessary to support the purpose of the study.

The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) division of the American

Library Association (ALA) publishes several reports about the value and current state of

academic libraries. The 2010 Value of Academic Libraries (ACRL) report mentions the

importance of librarian support to faculty and the institution when it comes to research for

institutional grants and personal research. Levite's report (as cited in ACRL,2010) describes

successful partnerships between librarians and K-12 teachers, the same applies to the

partnerships in higher education, that a partnership can develop with cooperation, coordination, and collaboration.

The ACRL report asks several questions which drive this study, such as "What types of randomized control trials are needed to demonstrate the impact of academic libraries? (p.63) as well as this question of "Do academic librarians who truly collaborate with faculty impact student learning more significantly than librarians who only coordinate?" (p.58).

Belanger, Bliquez & Mondal (2012) describe the steps in creating and assessing an information literacy project with faculty. Belanger et al. present an interesting model using several assessment methods including student pre and post-tests, student surveys, and faculty surveys. One point the authors make is the modification of the initial assessment methods once applied did not fit the purpose of the study. The researchers found the assessment and conclusions were more "meaningful" when working with faculty to create information literacy assessments into specific assignments. Students need to show mastery or competence of the actual information literacy and academic concepts in the class. There are several phases of the project over the course of two years or of the publication of the results. Miller (2010) also supports the importance of working with faculty to build assignments that support assessing a student's information literacy competencies. As was the situation with Belanger (2012), the process of librarians working with faculty to embed information literacy in assignment took over three years to gather enough data to report. Miller (2010) presents results of faculty by discipline, and their findings support the claim that many faculty want to work with librarians to incorporate information literacy goals in an assignment.

Adams, Gaffney, and Lynn (2016) delve into the relationship between faculty and librarians using an evidence-based approach. A qualitative study using interviews, the

researchers conclude mutual respect for each professional's expertise is necessary for a productive faculty and librarian relationship. As learned from some of the narratives, the faculty may deem the librarians' presence intrusive when developing the curriculum for the course. Hervold's (2010) research assesses the partnership of faculty and librarians to provide design the course and present information literacy instruction in a first-year freshman course. Results of the research include some positive and negative outcomes—one faculty member decided to teach an information literacy lesson without the librarian. Hervold used surveys for the assessment of the partnership by distributing a survey to 10 faculty and 10 librarians about their partnership experiences. A significant factor is also assessing the students who completed the course during the academic school year. Though one significant finding is the partnership only came to fruition with the constant outreach by the librarian to faculty, faculty did not initiate contact to collaborate. Faculty in the study mention they are still the "driver" in the course (Hervold, 2010, p.102). However, there is also more student follow up with the librarian when there was involvement of the librarian with the faculty. Hervold's significant conclusion is how schools with library science degree programs must prepare librarians with training in preparation for their roles as instructional librarians.

Moniz, Henry, & Eshleman, (2014, p. 74) provide a "collaboration checklist" for librarians. The items on this list, which include setting mutual goals and being an active participant support the research. Carson, Colosimo, Lake, & McMillan, (2014) present information about the Librarians' Research Institute (LRP), a research network of librarians from two Canadian universities. The LRP is another way librarians can work on building relationships with faculty as well as their own professional development because faculty and students are welcome to join the research group. Allen (2016) provides several tips on how librarians can

develop a partnership with faculty. Again, the librarian is the initiator of the partnership, while faculty reach out to librarians at the last minute with a request for an on the spot information literacy session. Asher, Duke, and the American Library Association (2011;2012;) present results of an ethnographic study with five participating universities in Illinois. There are many quotes from faculty praising the partnership with librarians whether embedded online or onsite. Though mostly positive there were negative comments where one faculty member claims librarians provide too much information that overwhelming and not necessary. Some faculty members suggest they would encourage their students to work with a librarian though they would prefer librarian assistance outside of class time.

Apparent is the limited number of quantitative studies addressing the question of faculty and librarian partnerships and the results of this partnership on student success. Though using different methods, the agreement in the literature is how both faculty and librarians focus is on the student and agree the priority is to enhance the student learning experience. (Monroe-Gulick, Valentine & Brooks-Kieffer, 2017). Morrison (2007) presents the historical research about librarian and faculty partnerships, and how successful information literacy and library instruction programs need faculty support and integration within the curriculum.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine if the faculty-librarian partnership in providing instructional support during a semester results in increased student information literacy skills leading to higher quality assignments than students without formal librarian assistance. Academic librarians need to show their value to the institution, and the faculty-librarian

partnership is one example of how librarians support the educational goals of the students and institution. The challenge is forming the partnerships with faculty—some faculty are supporters while some are not (Monroe-Gulick, Brien &White, 2013). Data will include measuring the performance of the experimental group and the control group, and faculty surveys. There will need to be enough supporting data ;thus the quasi-experimental study will occur over the course of the fall semester. For this study, although the instruction modality is not the focus, to ensure similar environments, online courses will be the environment to measure the outcome of the faculty-librarian partnership.

Applying the postpositive worldview (Creswell, 2018) the study will test the theory that the faculty-librarian collaboration will enhance the student's information literacy skills to find, evaluate, and use quality resources for assignments. The study will involve working with the same professors for the same courses with different sections—the experimental group. The professor will have a librarian work with the students in a section or sections, and not work with a librarian in the same course, different section—the control group.

Research Design

Creswell (2018) describes several designs or Denzin & Lincoln's "strategies of inquiry" (as cited by Creswell, 2018) to address the research question. The quantitative study will involve several variables and methods of measurement (Creswell, p.155). The dependent variables include student performance on assignments and faculty satisfaction levels following the faculty-librarian partnership. The independent variable is the library instruction throughout the semester. There will be a control group and experimental group, and the instrument of measurement will include the faculty survey to measure the effectiveness of library partnerships on the student assignments.

Population and Sample

The assignment is the determining factor in selecting the population. There are approximately 7,000 students of which 3,000 students taking an online class during a semester at BC College. The librarians will select 100 level English courses in which the students must complete an annotated bibliography. There are several sections of the courses running at one time. After obtaining all the IRB approvals, the next step is to identify faculty teaching more than one online section of the same ENG100 course. Librarians will contact the English department chair and the professors to ensure participation. The sample depends on the number of available courses. An online course may have any number of students usually averaging 20 students per section, required courses such as ENG 100 may have more students in each session. The librarians have a good working relationship with the English department chair who is supporting the study so participation though voluntary may not be difficult. Once the professors agree to participate, the sample will be separated using a random assignment of sections to the experimental and control groups.

Instrument

ENG100 is a 15-week course with the assignment due by week 12. The plan is for the librarian to remain in the online course for the duration of the semester. The professor will introduce the librarian, then invite the librarian to lead the discussion board during week 4 to work with the students on the annotated bibliography assignment. The librarian will remain in the course to monitor questions on the librarian discussion board forum. At the end of the semester, the professors will receive a survey via e-mail (see Appendix A). The survey instrument was adapted from Purdue University. See Appendix B for the letter requesting

approval to use the survey. The plan is to send 3 individual letters—one to each of the researchers of the study.

Procedures

Librarians have relationships with faculty from the business and English departments and provide onsite and online library instruction. To date, only librarians are assessing the instruction with occasional student surveys, but there is no existing method of learning about the faculty experience. Considering the relationship with the English faculty, the chair of the department is supporting the study and the proposal to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval of the proposal, all students enrolled in the online ENG 100 course need to sign an agreement or consent form allowing analysis of their overall performance and grades (McGowan, 2011).

Once identifying the professors and the sections, the same librarian will provide online instruction to the experimental groups sections. The information systems department will need to add the librarian as a teaching assistant for the next 15 weeks. The assignment is an annotated bibliography due in week 10. The librarian will lead the discussion board during week 4 but will remain in a forum to answer any questions during the term. Of note, the librarians provide online chat service as well as onsite assistance; the study will not prohibit a student from either the control of experimental group to access the services.

The librarian and professor will gather statistics including frequency of students accessing the librarian discussion board and the quality of posts. Faculty will then provide the annotated bibliography grades and the overall section grade averages for the experimental and control groups. The faculty survey (see Appendix A) is due at the end of the term when final student grades are due. The data analysis will start upon receipt of all the data including the faculty surveys. Reporting and sharing the results across the organization is the final step of the

process. Following this experiment, the librarians will return to the usual method to support

onsite and online for the next semester.

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Appendix A

Faculty Survey

Survey adapted with permission from

Jackson, B., MacMillan, M., & Sinotte, M. (2014). *Great Expectations: Results from a Faculty Survey of Students' Information Literacy Proficiency*. Retrieved from https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/iatul/2014/infolit/1/

Description: The following questionnaire contains grids. Please complete each grid and record any comments you have below the grid.

1. Student Resource Use Please fill out the chart below to indicate how important the various information sources are for your students and how proficient they are in the use of those resources.

Thinking about assignment resources which you require your students to use, please score the following resources from 1 -5, with 1 being low, and 5 being high (N/A for not applicable)

I – Importance – how important is it that students use this resource?

P – Proficiency – how well do you feel your students use this type of resource?

Type of source	I	P
Books (print or electronic)		
Specialized Encyclopedias (Access Science, Oxford Companion to Global Change)		
News Articles (The New York Times)		
Popular Articles (The Economist)		
Professional Articles (Modern Healthcare)		
Scholarly Articles (academic or peer-reviewed)		
Primary Sources (Diaries, manifestos)		
Government or NGO Sources (United Nations, WHO)		
Data Sources (statistics,		

Bioinformatics)		
Audio/Visual Sources (DVD, YouTube, images)		

2. Instructor Assessment of Student Resource Use Please fill out the chart below to indicate the importance you place on assessing the resources that your students use and how proficient you feel your students are in that use. For those aspects listed below that you

assess, please score each from 1 to 5, with 1 being low, and 5 being high: I – Importance – how much weight do you give this is this in your assessment of student work? P – Proficiency – how proficient do you feel your students are in the areas below?

Assessment	I	P
Number of resources used		
Quality of resources used		
Relevance of resources used		
Currency of resources used		
Variety of resources used		
Accuracy of the citations		

3. Instructor Assessment of Student Skills Please fill out the chart below to indicate how important various research skills are for your students and how proficient you think your students are at applying those skills. For the skills/attributes below, please score each from 1 to 5, with 1 being low, and 5 being high, on: I – Importance – how important is it that students demonstrate this skill? P – Proficiency – how proficient are your students in this area?

Skills	I	P
Ability to distinguish scholarly from popular material		
Ability to determine what info they need to answer their question(s)		
Understanding of biases in information		
Ability to use citations from one source to track other sources		
Understanding of the economic/political/social aspects of information production and dissemination		
Ability to evaluate information for quality, relevance, fitness for purpose		
Ability to read scholarly articles		

Ability to locate relevant data e.g. statistics.		
Ability to evaluate relevant data e.g. statistics.		

4. Student Skill Development

How do students in your classes learn to use information?

1. Ability to distinguish scholarly from popular material
2. Ability to determine what info they need to answer their question(s)
3. Understanding of biases in information
4. Ability to use citations from one source to track other sources
5. Understanding of the economic/political/social aspects of information production and dissemination
6. Ability to evaluate information for quality, relevance, fitness for purpose
7. Ability to read scholarly articles
8. Ability to locate relevant data e.g. statistics.
9. Ability to evaluate relevant data e.g. statistics.
10. Other
Please use the numbers 1-10 from the above table to indicate which skills are learned in which way.

Skill	I teach them	Expect them to have already	Collaborate with a Librarian	Expect them to learn on their own
1.Ability to distinguish scholarly from popular material				
2.Ability to determine what info they need to answer their question(s)				
3.Understanding of biases in information				
4.Ability to use citations from one source to track other				

Skill	I teach them	Expect them to have already	Collaborate with a Librarian	Expect them to learn on their own
sources				
5.Understanding of the economic /political/social aspects of information				
6.Ability to evaluate information for quality, relevance, fitness for purpose				
7.Ability to read scholarly articles				
8.Ability to locate relevant data e.g. statistics.				
9.Ability to evaluate relevant data e.g. statistics.				
10.Other – please describe				

Please answer the following

5. Have you used library resources or library instructional services before the fall semester?

Yes or No

6. Course and section number:

Appendix B

Brian Jackson
Margy MacMillan
Michelle Sinotte
Mount Royal University, Calgary
Alberta, Canada

Dear Mr. Jackson, Ms. MacMillan, and Ms. Sinotte:

I am requesting your permission to use your survey instrument included in your

publication, "Great Expectations: Results from a Faculty Survey of Students' Information

Literacy Proficiency" to complete my dissertation research. I have enclosed a consent form for

your approval. I am researching the faculty-librarian partnership and how faculty perceive library

instructional services. I would like to use certain questions that pertain to my research. I will

forward a copy of my research when complete.

Please return the signed consent form if you will grant me permission to use the survey

tool. Please contact me at sgadallah@njcu.edu if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Van Alstyne
Doctoral Student
New Jersey City University