

Psyched About Assessment!!!

A Simple Assessment to Determine Undergraduate Psychology Students' Abilities to Use PsycINFO®

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Proposing the Assessment

- Reached out to Psychology Department faculty teaching a psychology research methods course for Spring 2019
- Proposed an assessment to determine the impact the library instruction sessions have on 1) where the students look for required academic literature and 2) are they successful in finding the required academic literature for their research project
- Initially proposed that students add one source from the final bibliography of their research paper to a Google Doc created for each section of the class.



Customizing Assessment to Instructor Preferences

- Professor B did not want to add another requirement for students since the syllabus had already been published. He therefore proposed that the TA's for each section copy and paste the bibliographies for each paper into the Google Doc.
 - Professor A did not want to create more work for his TA's and requested that students search for and enter one possible citation for their paper into the Google Doc at the end of each library instruction section.
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Learning Outcomes for Library Presentation

- Students recognize reputable, authoritative, reliable sources of information
- Students demonstrate ability to search and locate scholarly, peer-reviewed, empirical literature



Research Methods

Professor A

- Six sections
- References collected from 4 of 6 sections during library instruction

Professor B

- Six sections
- References compiled by section TAs for 6 of 6 sections as part of a pre-bibliography turned in prior to final paper. 2 references per student.



Results

Professor A

- 36 total citations
 - 36 Indexed in APA PsycInfo® (100%)
 - 32 Peer-Reviewed (89%)
 - 33 Empirical (92%)
 - 29 Both Peer-Reviewed & Empirical (81%)
 - 0 Questionable Publications (0%)



Results

Professor B

- 191 total citations
 - 164 Indexed in APA PsycInfo® (86%)
 - 179 Peer-Reviewed (94%)
 - 178 Empirical (93%)
 - 168 Both Peer-Reviewed & Empirical (88%)
 - 6 Questionable Publications (3%)



Discussion


- Less participation in Class A where assessment was part of instruction session, perhaps because
 - 10 min. were allocated at end of session for students to find sources. Some students may have needed more time, or perhaps chose not to participate.
 - One instruction session was cancelled due to social media threat against campus that day.
- Questionable publications
 - May have been more prevalent in Class B because:
 - More sources were collected
 - Sources were not collected immediately after instruction session, and students apparently used search tools other than APA PsycInfo®, most likely Google Scholar.
 - Were not part of initial assessment plan, but became an intriguing side finding



Conclusion

The assessment confirmed for us that more than 80% of students are able to find empirical articles from peer-reviewed journals. We were, however, concerned about the 6 questionable publications cited by students in Professor B's class. To address this, we have added a brief discussion of questionable publications to our PSYC 012 presentations. We recommend using Library Links in Google Scholar to help identify high-quality resources in Google Scholar that are available through the UCR Library.

It might be interesting to include a pre-assessment in the future to determine the degree of change represented by library instruction.



Questions/Comments?

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