Information Use during the First College Year: Findings from the NSSE Experiences with Information Literacy Module

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What is NSSE?

- Student Engagement Theory
- NSSE is designed to gather information on the extent to which students engage in and are exposed to proven educational practices that are related to desirable learning outcomes.
Experiences w/ Information Literacy Module

• Collaboration between NSSE & academic librarians
• Designed to assess student engagement in activities that develop information literacy skills
• Opt-in addition to the core NSSE instrument
• 53,000 students at 84 institutions responded to the module in 2014
Research Questions

1. How often do first-year students engage in activities associated with information literacy skills development?

2. Do first-year students exhibit different patterns of engagement in information literacy activities?

3. If so, which student and institutional characteristics are related to these engagement patterns?
Methods

• Descriptive analyses
• Latent class analysis
• Multinomial logistic regression
Descriptive Statistics

Completed an assignment that used an information source other than required course readings
- 80% responded “often” or “very often”

Completed an assignment that used the library's electronic collection of articles, books, and journals
- 51% responded “often” or “very often”

Decided not to use an information source in a course assignment due to its questionable quality
- 37% responded “often” or “very often”

Changed the focus of a paper or project based on information you found while researching the topic
- 42% responded “often” or “very often”

Looked for a reference that was cited in something you read
- 45% responded “often” or “very often”

Identified how a book, article, or creative work has contributed to a field of study
- 42% responded “often” or “very often”

Percentage of students who responded “often” or “very often”
Latent Class Analysis

Percentage of students who responded “often” or “very often”
Latent Class Analysis

- Infrequent Users: 23%
- Basic Searchers: 35%
- Deep Searchers: 20%
- Critical Searchers: 22%
Multinomial Results

• Best predictors:
  1. Reflective & Integrative Learning
  2. Learning Strategies

• Other student and institutional characteristics were only able to significantly discriminate between *Critical Searchers* and *Infrequent Users*
Implications

• Most first-year students use information, but many fail to do so effectively and/or critically
• Students have a wide varying information literacy instructional needs
• Few observable characteristics correlated with engagement with information sources
• Improve information skills via encouraging reflective and integrative learning and/or learning strategy activities
• Improve information literacy skills prior to college entry
Thanks!

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