Breakout Session 4C: Information Literacy Misconceptions and Librarian Perceptions

Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, Jillian Collier, and Allison Rand, University of Illinois at Urbana and Ian Singer, Credo Reference
Forthcoming!

Hinchliffe, Lisa Janicke, Rand, Allison, and Collier, Jillian. (forthcoming 2018) "Predictable Information Literacy Misconceptions of First-Year College Students," *Communications in Information Literacy* 12(1).
AVAILABLE ONLINE

SURVEY FINDINGS (1)

Searching and Evaluating:

- Librarians at both community colleges and four-year colleges and universities ranked the ability to evaluate sources for reliability as the top challenge for first-year students.
- Students at four-year schools also lack awareness of library resources and find it challenging to identify appropriate sources for their assignments.
- At two-year schools, students lack prior information literacy experience and are not well versed in advanced research skills.
- Many new students lack experience in using an academic library or completing research projects.
SURVEY FINDINGS (2)

Metacognition:

• Students don’t always understand that they need to learn these skills, or how they are helpful.

• Respondents stated that first-year students sometimes lack an understanding of what they need to learn or how research can benefit them.

• Overconfidence may make students less willing to attend or absorb new training.

• Other librarians cited problems such as student apathy and a lack of attention span as additional challenges.
Preparation/Context:

Librarians noted that some students arrive having attended high schools without a library and lack basic computer skills or experience navigating a library.
Challenges Librarians Face:

- Limited Contact Time with Students
- Competing Learning Demands in the First-Year
- Overloaded Curriculum
- Misalignment with Faculty Expectations
- Instruction Out of Assignment Context
All research generates further inquiry.

Lisa proposed a follow-up study to Ian.

Credo agreed to partner.
RESEARCH TEAM

➢ **Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe**, Professor/Coordinator for Information Literacy Services and Instruction, University Library and Affiliate Faculty, School of Information Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

➢ **Allison Rand**, Graduate Student, Master’s in Library Science

➢ **Jillian Collier**, Graduate Student, Master’s in Library Science
ADVISORY BOARD

➢ Lori DuBois, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Williams College
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➢ Lauren Kosrow, Reference Librarian, Triton College Library
➢ Ray Pun, First Year Student Success Librarian, California State University-Fresno
➢ April Sheppard, Assistant Director of Public Services, Arkansas State University
➢ Leslie A. Warren, Dean, Academic Information Services, Northern Michigan University
➢ Ian Singer, General Manager, Credo Reference
NEXT STEP:
THE MISCONCEPTIONS
STUDY
CONCEPTUAL BASIS: “PREDICTABLE MISUNDERSTANDINGS”

“Learners are not blank slates. They come to the learning situation with prior knowledge, experience, and, quite possibly, some misconceptions.

Such misunderstandings, as opposed to confusion or inattention, typically flow from prior experience and a plausible inference based on that experience … existing misconceptions get in the way of understanding, and they have to be recognized and rooted out.

For new and improved ways of thinking to take hold, old “facts” and habits of thought and action have to be questioned and sometimes unlearned.”
INVESTIGATING MISCONCEPTIONS

Fundamental Question:

*What are the misconceptions that drive errors in information literacy practice?*

Challenge:

*We see the errors and struggles but how to uncover the misconception?*
NOTE: A MISCONCEPTION INVENTORY

List of Erroneous Beliefs (What Students Believe Instead of the Correct Belief)

Not All Students Have All Erroneous Beliefs

Not Empirical Finding of How Many Students Have Each Misconception
STUDY DESIGN

Phase 1: Develop Misconception Inventory
Phase 2: Expand/Validate Inventory Through Librarian Focus Groups
PHASE 1: DEVELOP MISCONCEPTION INVENTORY

1. Extracted all open-ended comments from the Credo/LJ survey.

2. Code each comment for:
   - Interpretation Predictable Misunderstanding (Free Text)
   - Reflection of ACRL Framework Concepts (Yes/No for Each Concept)
   - Reflects Student Cognition (Yes/No)
   - Reflects Student Affect (Yes/No)
   - Reflects Faculty Affect (Yes/No)
   - Notes (Free Text)

3. Synthesize Misunderstandings
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THE MISCONCEPTIONS

First-year students ...

1. believe they are supposed to do their research without assistance (and therefore they do not ask for help and see the library as intimidating).
2. believe that learners are outside of the community of scholars (not within and thus do not see themselves as an apprentice in the community of practice).
3. believe research is a linear (uni-directional) process (and therefore do not see it as an iterative process and integrated into their work).
4. perceive the library as a place to get books (and not as a learning commons with great variety of source types and services).
5. believe that relevancy rankings in search results reflect quality (rather than search statement relevance).
6. conflate achieving access and information quality (and therefore do not differentiate between finding information and finding good information).
7. believe that freely available Internet resources are sufficient for academic work (because they have been successful using them and therefore to not see the value of library resources).
8. think Google is a sufficient search tool (because they have been successful using it and therefore do not see the value of library databases).
9. believe that they are information literate (though they do not use that terminology).
PHASE 2: LIBRARIAN FOCUS GROUPS

Participants: Librarians Who Work with First-Year College Students in Reference and/or Instruction Setting

Expand and Validate the Misconception Inventory

Recruited via ILI-L and FYE-L Listservs and Twitter

Conducted Online (Blackboard Collaborate)

4 Focus Groups

5-12 Participants/Group
FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

➢ Two additional misconceptions identified
➢ One misconception eliminated (determined to be not-yet-known)
➢ One encompassed by another

FINAL RESULT – 10 MISCONCEPTIONS
THEMATIC GROUPING
MISCONCEPTIONS BY THEME

Library
* First year students believe they are supposed to do their research without assistance.
* First year students perceive the library as only a place to get books or to study.
* First year students believe that all library sources and discovery tools are credible.

Information Access
* First year students believe that freely available Internet resources are sufficient for academic work.
* First year students think Google is a sufficient search tool.
* First year students believe that accessibility is an indicator of quality.

Research Process
* First year students believe that research is a linear, uni-directional process.
* First year students think that every question has a single answer.

Information Literacy
* First year students believe that they are information literate.
Influence instructional design and pedagogical approaches
Inform future development of Credo Information Literacy Modules
Serve as a theoretical foundation for follow-on empirical investigations
THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?