EXPLORING INFORMATION LITERACY IN STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

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Setting

Muhlenberg College: 2,225 students
12:1 student:faculty ratio

Trexler Library: 17 staff
-16.2 FTE staff (total)
-7.7 FTE librarians
-8.5 FTE paraprofessionals
Information Literacy at Muhlenberg
IL Assessment at Muhlenberg

- **2009**: Research Practices Survey
- **2010**: Focus group with FYS
- **2012**: Course-embedded assignment analysis
- **2012**: Focus group with juniors/seniors
- **2013**: Assessment in Action
IL Assessment at Muhlenberg

- 2009: Research Practices Survey
- 2010: Focus group with FYS
- 2012: Course-embedded assignment analysis
- 2012: Focus group with juniors/seniors
- 2013: Assessment in Action
Inquiry Question

How do Muhlenberg students learn about and do library research, as well as use library and other information to accomplish their academic assignments and goals?
Methodology
Participant Recruitment
Scope

Experiences with and perceptions of:

- Recent assignments
- Selecting, evaluating, & using information
- Learning about selecting, evaluating, & using information
Selected Findings

- Nature of Assignments & Information
- Learning About Library Research
- Evaluating Information
- Assessment of Strengths/Weaknesses
Selected Findings:
Nature of Assignments & Information

Freshmen: Carefully structured and managed

Juniors & Seniors: Significant student choice
Selected Findings: Learning About Library Research

Juniors & Seniors:
- More library instruction (positive perceptions)
- Experimentation
- One-on-one with librarians

Freshmen:
- Some library instruction (negative perceptions)
Selected Findings: Evaluating Information

Freshmen: Did not make judgments themselves

Juniors & Seniors: Various criteria and strategies
Selected Findings: Assessment of Strengths/Weaknesses

Juniors & Seniors:
- Knowledge
- Confidence
- Citations
- Access

Freshmen:
- Research process
Inquiry Question

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Questions?

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Food Deserts, Walker Evans & the Abandoned Tower:

The evolution of the library role in the first year experience

Sharon Wiles-Young
Roseann Bowerman

Lehigh University
Librarians invited into individual courses to teach Information Literacy.

No required credit course with Information Literacy Goals.
EvoLUtion Seminar Goals

- Provide an introduction to the university, its mission, structure and culture
- Introduce students to academic and residential expectations and resources
- **Assist students in developing information literacy skills**
- Provide students with an introductory opportunity to explore their individual identity and their new communities.
- Enhance students' ability to work in groups/teams
- Further expose students to the importance of writing and critical thinking skills in the first year
- Guide students in the development of personal and academic goals for their college experience
Librarians’ focus

- Create awareness of the Information Cycle and available Library resources
- Develop and support achievable and engaging topics
- Address common student information usage difficulties
Walker Evans – famous Depression Era photos
Is South Bethlehem a “food desert” – Southside Farmers Market
Urban renewal in South Bethlehem
Bethlehem Skate Plaza
Urban Renewal
South Bethlehem Greenway
Martin Tower
Bethlehem Steel’s unoccupied skyscraper
Common deficits identified in Research Skills Assessment

- Lacked awareness of the difference between popular periodicals and scholarly/peer reviewed journals
- Lacked ability to interpret bibliographic citations
- Difficulty evaluating websites for balance and authority
EvoLUtion Seminar: Fall of 2013

- Project done as class
- More discussion of critical thinking
- Desire for all students to come to the libraries for discussion of services and tour