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Impact assessment of librarian/faculty collaboration to develop the digital literacy skills of a first-year composition class

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Library resources at the American University of Nigeria are mostly digital, and students are usually encouraged to use them for their own benefit. Our new students come from different educational backgrounds, and one of the first things they learn is that every course has a written component. For first year students, classroom expectations can become daunting unless the relevant composition and digital information literacy skills have been developed.



The faculty/librarian partnership

This intentional collaboration focuses on mentoring a first-year composition class on the effective use of educational databases to safely access, identify, process, evaluate, retrieve, reserve and store needed information for casual reading, and research purposes.



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Rationale for the collaboration

- i. Over-reliance of students on peers or questionable websites instead of accessing available credible sources at the library
- ii. Limited knowledge of librarians' specialist skills
- iii. Student misunderstandings about the writing or research processes
- iv. Misconceptions about citation skills
- v. Ignorance of academic integrity in information usage



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Integrating DIL Skills into the first year composition syllabus

Highlights:

- i. Understanding WAC and the writing process
- ii. Integrating library services in academics
- iii. Accessing sources
- iv. Narrowing the subject matter for topics
- v. Retrieving relevant sources
- vi. Evaluating sources
- vii. Using sources ethically



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Excerpts from a pre-DIL class survey



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Choose from the best option that fits into the following question

1. Have ever used or have an electronic library in your high school?
(a). Yes (b). No (c). Not sure
2. Do you think library sources are important to learning and research?
(a). Yes (b) No (c) Not Sure
3. Where do you start searching for sources for your research paper?
(a) Google (b) My books (c) Library (d) Ask my friends
4. Which of the following do you use for research in the Library?
(a) OPAC (b) Databases (c) Open access (d) Library shelf
5. How would you rate your library usage skills?
(a) High (b). Medium (c). Low (d). Poor
6. In using electronic library for research, I understand the importance keyword search?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure
7. Which of the following do you consider a priority when writing a paper?
(a) Books (b) Journal article (c) Encyclopedia (d) online Wikipedia
8. I assess the quality of any material before I use them for my research paper?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure
9. I know that every source I use for my research paper is someone else's intellectual property?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure
10. I can cite sources I use for my research papers properly?
(a) Yes (b) No (c) Not sure

Needs-assessment inquiries and findings



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Have you ever used e-library in high school

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 1 | 14 | 28.57 | 28.57 | 28.57 |
| No | 2 | 34 | 69.39 | 69.39 | 97.96 |
| Not sure | 3 | 1 | 2.04 | 2.04 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 49 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Can you cite sources properly?

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 1 | 7 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| No | 2 | 30 | 61.22 | 61.22 | 75.51 |
| Not sure | 3 | 12 | 24.49 | 24.49 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 49 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

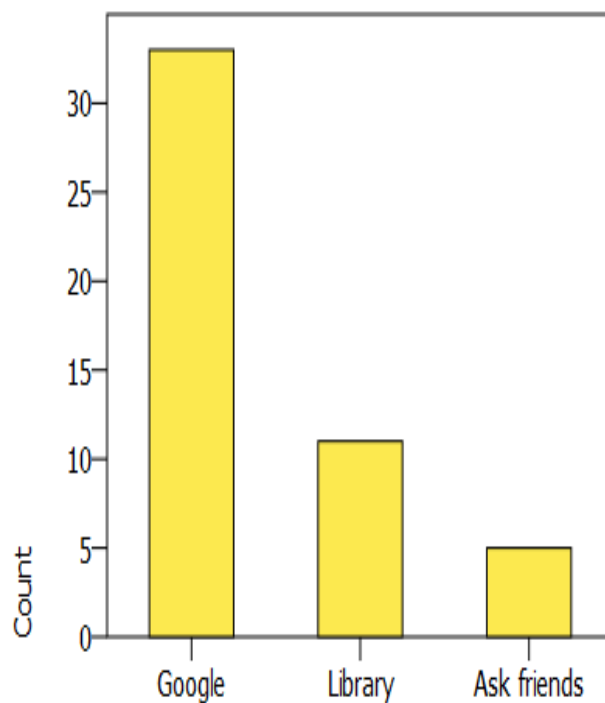


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Where do you start searching for sources?

| Value Label | Value | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cum Percent |
|-------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|-------------|
| Google | 1 | 33 | 67.35 | 67.35 | 67.35 |
| Library | 2 | 11 | 22.45 | 22.45 | 89.80 |
| Ask friends | 3 | 5 | 10.20 | 10.20 | 100.00 |
| Total | | 49 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

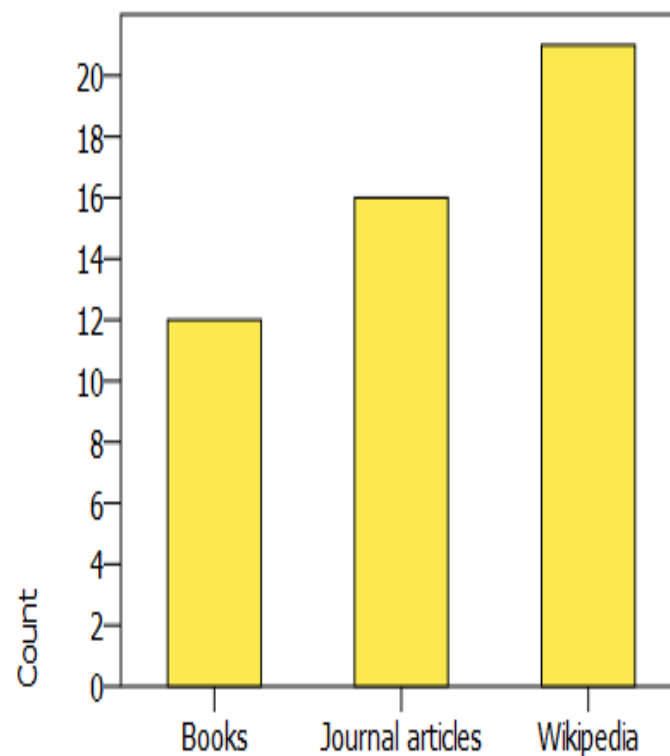
Bar Chart



Prioritize the following research sources?

| Value Label | Value | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cum Percent |
|------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|-------------|
| Books | 1 | 12 | 24.49 | 24.49 | 24.49 |
| Journal articles | 2 | 16 | 32.65 | 32.65 | 57.14 |
| Wikipedia | 3 | 21 | 42.86 | 42.86 | 100.00 |
| Total | | 49 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Bar Chart



Implications of the pre-DIL classes survey

- ✓ 69% of new students do not have prior knowledge of the e-library and this contributes to the under-usage of library resources
- ✓ Consequently, 67% of students surveyed start their search for sources using Google
- ✓ 43% prioritize Wikipedia articles for research
- ✓ 61% have no knowledge of citation styles or how to use sources ethically



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Post-DIL classes survey

- ✓ Rating of research skills taught in the composition class
- ✓ Assessing the library interventions
- ✓ Evaluating one's research skills
- ✓ Identifying areas for follow-ups
- ✓ Evaluating the frequency of instruction



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Question 1

11 students rate the skills very high
26 rated high
8 low

Rank the library research skills offered in WR1101?

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Middle | 3 | 8 | 17.78 | 17.78 | 17.78 |
| high | 4 | 26 | 57.78 | 57.78 | 75.56 |
| Very high | 5 | 11 | 24.44 | 24.44 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 45 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Question 2

13 students rated the skills extremely important

21 rated very important

11 rated important

Do you think the library research session had positive impact on your research skills?

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|---------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Important | 3 | 11 | 24.44 | 24.44 | 24.44 |
| Very important | 4 | 21 | 46.67 | 46.67 | 71.11 |
| Extremely important | 5 | 13 | 28.89 | 28.89 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 45 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Question 3

12 students rated their understanding
of research and how to use the library
very high
28 rated high
6 rated low

How well do you now understand research and how
to use the library for research?

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Low | 3 | 6 | 13.04 | 13.04 | 13.04 |
| high | 4 | 28 | 60.87 | 60.87 | 73.91 |
| Very high | 5 | 12 | 26.09 | 26.09 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 46 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Question 4

8 students still more help on research
paper writing skills

23 need more help on citations

11 students need more help on
evaluating sources

4 accessing sources

What sections of the research skills do you need
more help?

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|------------------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Accessing sources | 1 | 4 | 8.70 | 8.70 | 8.70 |
| Evaluating sources | 2 | 11 | 23.91 | 23.91 | 32.61 |
| Citing properly | 3 | 23 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 82.61 |
| Research paper writing | 4 | 8 | 17.39 | 17.39 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 46 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Question 5

11 students indicated that more time was needed for the library research skills

35 students said the time was enough

Do you think enough time was given during the library research classes?

| <i>Value Label</i> | <i>Value</i> | <i>Frequency</i> | <i>Percent</i> | <i>Valid Percent</i> | <i>Cum Percent</i> |
|------------------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Yes | 1 | 35 | 76.09 | 76.09 | 76.09 |
| No | 2 | 11 | 23.91 | 23.91 | 100.00 |
| <i>Total</i> | | 46 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Some benefits of DIL integration in the First Year Composition Syllabus

- ✓ Students build lifelong interconnected DIL skills
- ✓ Students enhance their research competencies with both classroom and independent practice
- ✓ Students understand citation styles better
- ✓ Students promote academic integrity through honest scholarship and attribution of sources
- ✓ The faculty and the librarian work together to design term paper questions which have resources in the library database
- ✓ It strengthens the collaboration between the library and the Department of English language & Literature
- ✓ It promotes the relevance of DIL integration in syllabi at the American University of Nigeria



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Feedback

- Comparisons with AMICAL institutions
- Possible collaborations on instructional technologies and assignment setting for first year students
- Motivation strategies for student engagement with DIL skills
- The way forward for librarians, students and faculty to sustain academic integrity



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