

What First-Year Students Learn from One-Shot Information Literacy Sessions and What (They Think) They Already Know

Emma Brennan-Wydra & Tori Culler

Problem Statement

To assess what undergraduate students learn in one-shot, in-person information literacy sessions, we administered online questionnaires to students immediately before and two weeks after they attended one of eleven sections of an introductory composition course taught by the same librarian. Our goal was to identify differences in pre-session and post-session responses with a particular focus on three areas:

- Conducting searches
- Evaluating sources
- Navigating the University Library system

Data analysis indicates that students improved with respect to navigating the University Library system, but offered mixed results in the other two areas due to students' high level of confidence before the sessions.

Methods

Questionnaire Development

We reviewed existing instruments and submitted our draft to the library's assessment specialist for expert review. We conducted cognitive interviews as part of our piloting to further refine the survey (n=5).

Pre-Session Survey

Pre-session surveys were administered at the beginning of each library session prior to instruction (n=159).

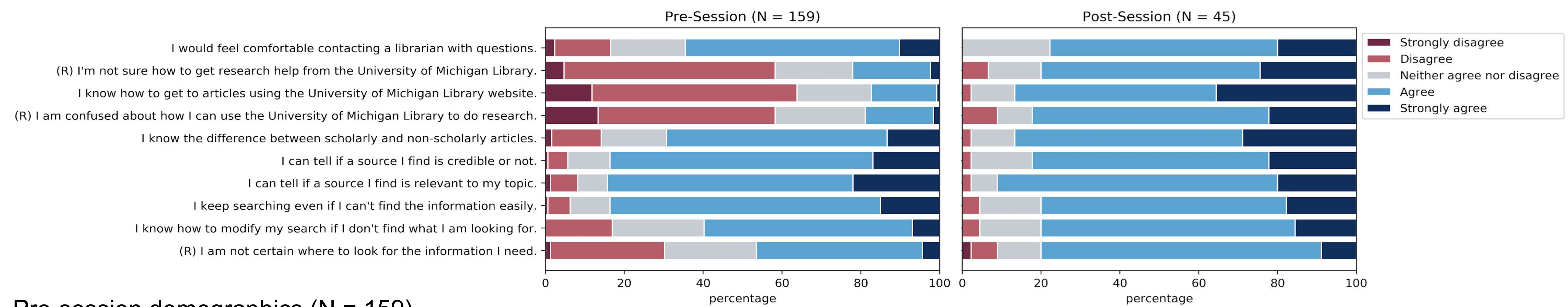
Post-Session Survey

Participants were contacted by email two weeks after their instruction session to take the post-session survey for a chance to win one of ten \$10 Amazon gift cards. Forty-five students took the post-session survey, for a response rate of 28%.

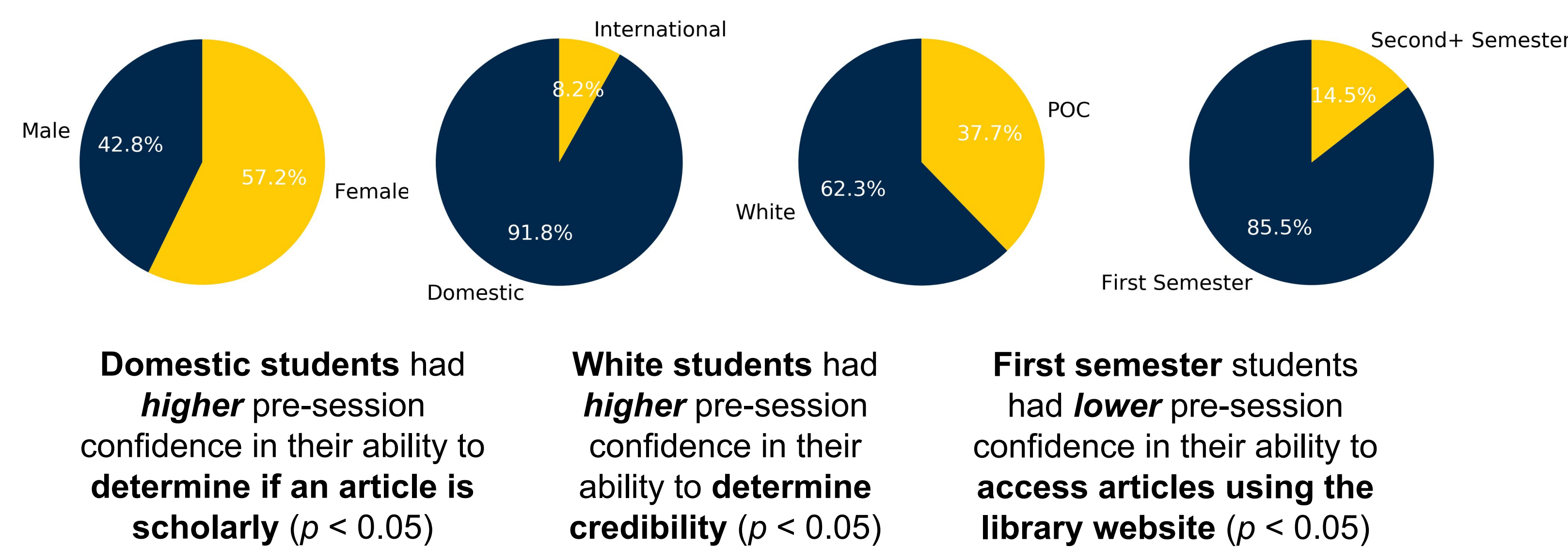
Data Analysis

The pre-and post data sets were merged and analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired t-tests. Demographic data was obtained and differences by gender, race, ethnicity, and time at the institution were calculated.

Results



Pre-session demographics (N = 159)

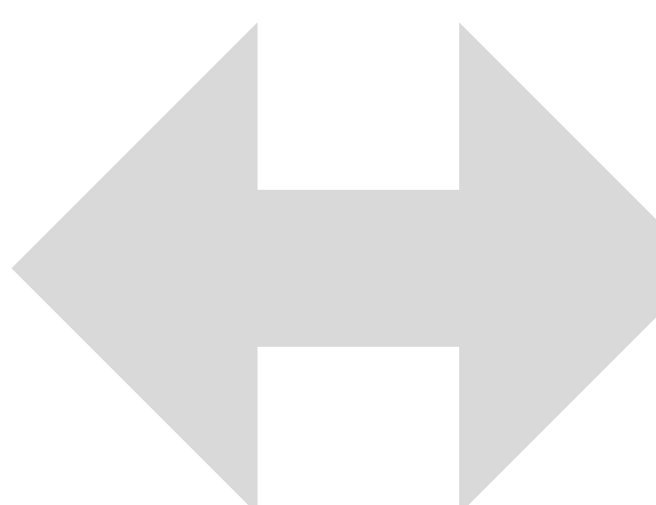


Largest improvements from pre-test to post-test



- I know how to **get to articles** using the U-M Library website
Mean change = +1.73, $t(36) = 10.07$, $p < 0.001$
- I am confused about how to **use the U-M Library to do research**
Reverse-coded; mean change = +1.35, $t(36) = 7.40$, $p < 0.001$
- I'm not sure **how to get research help** from the U-M Library
Reverse-coded; mean change = +1.27, $t(36) = 6.89$, $p < 0.001$

No change between pre-test and post-test



- I **keep searching** even if I can't find the information easily
Mean change = -0.02, $t(44) = -0.16$, $p = 0.87$
- I can tell if a source I find is **credible or not**
Mean change = -0.02, $t(44) = -0.22$, $p = 0.83$
- I can tell if a source I find is **relevant to my topic**
Mean change = +0.09, $t(44) = 0.58$, $p = 0.56$

Acknowledgements

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant RE-95-17-0104-17. The authors would also like to credit the other members of the Library Assessment for Student Learning Lab: Doreen Bradley, Elizabeth Hanley, Marley Kalt, Jo Angela Oehrli, and Soo Young Rieh.



Implications

These results have much to offer in the way of **reenvisioning how first-year students are introduced to the University Library**. Despite touring the library during orientation, first-year students **reported that they did not feel confident in their ability to navigate the U-M Library system before attending the library instruction session**.

Furthermore, students felt they learned "a lot" about searching for and evaluating sources even though their confidence in these areas did not improve:

- **89% (N = 40) of students agreed or strongly agreed that they "learned a lot about how to conduct searches at the college level"**
- **71% (N = 32) agreed or strongly agreed that they "learned a lot about how to evaluate sources."**

These findings imply that **students' pre-session confidence may be falsely inflated. Pre-session evaluations could allow for comparison of students' performance before and after the session.**