Student Library Use Data and Class Standing

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For starters – a little about us

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What are we going to talk about?

• Background - Libraries and Academic Success
  – The problems
  – Traditional metrics
  – What others have done to examine how libraries contribute to academic success

• Methods of Our Study

• The Data
  – What did we learn?
  – What else can we learn from our data?
The problem with defining academic success

- What predicts academic success?
- What can be done to increase academic success?
- How can academic success be put in the context of the library?
  - Assisting the (insert here) profession
  - Adding value to the greater institution
  - (Secures the budget for the library)
The traditional metrics of academic success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Schools</th>
<th>Colleges &amp; Universities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• LSAT</td>
<td>• SAT / ACT</td>
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<td>• Grades</td>
<td>• Grades</td>
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<td>– First year in particular</td>
<td>• Job / Grad School</td>
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<td>• Passing the bar exam</td>
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<td>• Jobs</td>
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In General: Students also need to acquire “soft skills” such as Organization, Time Management, Motivation, Writing and Interpersonal Communication abilities
When it comes to libraries, metrics are fuzzy

• As for *quantitative* information:
  
  – Space for collections
    • Huge cost for resources which administrators don’t see patrons using
  
  – Space for students
    • Usage has changed over time (the Starbucks effect)
    • Administrators may see the space as potential faculty offices
  
  – Historical reliance on accreditation standards to speak of the library’s value

• When we do collect *qualitative* data, it tends to come from surveys
  
  – Suffer from self-reporting bias
  
  – What do these surveys really tell us?
What have others said about trying to measure academic success?

  - Questionnaire on library usage (251 students) was compared to their academic achievement for a semester
  - A positive correlation was found between academic achievement and the use of a number of different library resources and services

  - Study used electronic resources as a measure of library use and grade point average as an indicator of academic success
  - Students with higher GPAs tend to use library online resources more and with a higher frequency than those with lower GPAs

  - Expanded its system of evaluation to share the results of information literacy assessments with teaching faculty
  - Stronger partnerships with course instructors and other departments engaged in academic support
So, what exactly did we do?

- Started off wanting to test an old assumption
- Stuck with quantitative data – avoided surveys or self-reporting bias
- Pulled as many different kinds of library-use metrics as possible
- Paired these metrics with grade metrics
- Broke out the data according to program and year
- Tried to interpret what we found objectively
No animals were harmed as part of the study!
The methods of our study – what did we use?

• Our data sources included:
  – OPUS (for grades)
  – ALEPH (for resource usage)
  – Access control (for facilities usage)
    • ECO / Lockshop

• Our data sources did not include:
  – ILLIAD
  – Blackboard analytics
  – Database usage (not yet possible, but Shibboleth may change what’s available)

• Raw data was not enough
  • Needed to have findable connection points in these records
Disclaimers and Limitations

- Our data ran Fall of 2010 through Fall of 2013
  - Therefore, for JD’s, we only have a complete picture for one class

- Collection issues
  - Not all of our collection circulates; therefore, no data on usage
  - In house use was added
  - What does circulation of text books and study aids tell us?
  - Aleph implemented in Oct 2010

- Access control issues
  - Some students enter and leave frequently
    - Smokers, lockers, hyperactive personality, printer/scanner usage
    - Not all entrances work quite the same way

- Manual sign-in entries were not counted; not tracked at the same level of detail as available data
  - A small portion of our traffic is via this method

- Entries with zero values for GPA were eliminated from analysis (32 of 942 – 3.4%); however these entries are worth considering (more on this later)
Data – Law Students generally
Data – JD’s

JD - 3 year traditional students

Transactions

Values
- Average of Circulation
- Average of Entrances

GPA

EMORY | LAW
Data – JD’s in more detail

- JD predictions of success (role of transfers/dual enrolled, if any?)
- Obviously year of program will have an impact
- Top 25% of the 1L JD students = 3.6 or better GPA; Bottom 25% = 3.1 or lower GPA
- Notice the max numbers change. For top performers, the max number nearly doubles each year
Data – JM’s

JM - 1 year professional students

Transactions

Values
- Average of Circulation
- Average of Entrances

GPA

EMORY | LAW
Data – JM’s in more detail

- Harder to interpret
- Pay full freight so ...
- ELS wants them to succeed
Data – LLM’s

LLM - post-degree students, many non-native speakers

Transactions

GPA

Values
- Average of Circulation
- Average of Entrances
Data – LLM’s in more detail

At the top of the class we see steady usage.

Bottom of the class shows greater variation.
Data – SJD’s

SJD - terminal graduate degree (up to 7 years)
• More JM’s than JD’s (there are reasons); neither GPA is great (top 25%)
What does the data tell us?

- In general, the more library entries, the higher the GPA

- Would like to do a better job of tying in resource usage but data collection / interpretation is problematic

- Different programs need to be better evaluated because their populations have varying needs and predispositions
How else can this information be used?

- **Student care**
  - Determining students who need help but aren’t getting it – those zero GPA students – can you debrief with Admissions or Student Services to try and improve outcomes?

- **Better targeting of resources**
  - Such as hours and facility concerns
  - Exploration of new teaching and outreach methods

- **Trends can help with management/budget issues**