

A MIXED-METHODS EVALUATION OF USING POPULAR MEDIA TO TEACH INFORMATION LITERACY CONCEPTS

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PURPOSE

Seeking a way to introduce freshmen to information literacy in an engaging manner, excerpts from popular media that illustrated themes pertinent to the concepts of information ethics and evaluation were incorporated into orientation sessions for one academic year.

The goal of modifying the instruction was to facilitate discussion and comprehension of how these selected concepts were depicted on-screen, including how the examples apply to students' experiences. The study sought to measure whether televisual media contributed to student comprehension of IL concepts when used in an instructional setting to introduce and illustrate IL in action.



METHODS

Two methods were used to assess student comprehension of selected IL concepts: pre- and posttests conducted during one-shot instruction sessions, and focus groups held approximately one month after instruction. A mixed-methods approach was chosen in order to achieve methodological triangulation. The research was conducted in Fall 2012 and Spring 2013 at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY.

- Quantitative approach: 10-item questionnaires administered before & after instruction to control and experimental groups (N=193).
- Qualitative approach: Two focus group discussions (one consisting of students from control group, one experimental) with a total of 11 participants. The focus participants were recruited from the instruction sessions with the incentive of free pizza.

LESSON PLAN

- Tour of physical library
- Intro to research process (screen 30 Rock clip)
- Intro to evaluating sources (screen Colbert, Parks & Rec clips)
- Intro to library website & catalog
- Demo 1-2 databases
- Class discussion and wrap up

TIME REQ.

15 min
10 min
15 min
10 min
10 min
15 min
75 MIN

The quantitative data show that student test results increased among the experimental group and remained relatively level in the control group. The tests evidence a potential increase in comprehension among students viewing television excerpts illustrating IL concepts.

The qualitative results indicate some awareness of the concepts of evaluation and information ethics among both control and experimental groups.

THEMES BY FOCUS GROUP QUESTION

QUESTION	THEME	FREQ.
What do you remember most from your class in the library?	Television excerpts	4
Can you describe one thing you learned from the class?	Library services	5
Do you feel that the class helped you to better evaluate resources?	Skills remained same	4
Did the class cause you to think about any topics regarding information ethics?	Have not considered these topics	6
Did you enjoy the class?	Enjoyed due to content	4

PRE- AND POST-TEST SCORES

	EXPERIMENTAL (N=103)	CONTROL (N=93)
Pretest Mean	4.7	4.9
Posttest Mean	5.8	5
Difference	+1.07	+.13
P Value=0.05	P=.013	P=.064

FINDINGS

1. This instructional initiative was assessed using mixed methods and minimal resources, consisting of one researcher and a very limited budget. Time spent, however, is an important consideration.
2. The study as a whole represents a practical, easy-to-implement approach to familiarizing students with fundamental IL concepts within the constraints of a one-shot library instruction session.
3. Similar investigations into whether a given teaching intervention impacts student learning can be assessed using the same methodological approach of pre- and posttest questionnaires and focus groups.

Televisual media may be a valuable means of familiarizing students with IL and can be integrated into instruction sessions in an accessible and dialogue-provoking manner. Student comprehension of selected IL concepts saw a statistically significant increase among the experimental group that viewed excerpts from popular media that corresponded to the material being discussed. The results support the hypothesis that student comprehension in regards to selected IL concepts among the experimental group would be higher than that of a control group which participated in only group discussion.

IMPLICATIONS