

BEYOND SEARCHING FOR SOURCES

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Using research data to explore
the intersections between
information literacy and
composition instruction

CONTEXT

University of Illinois at Chicago

- Public, urban, research 1 institution
- Minority majority

17,511 undergraduates

8,114 graduate students

3,007 professional students

416 continuing education students

29,048 total



Photo by Annie Armstrong

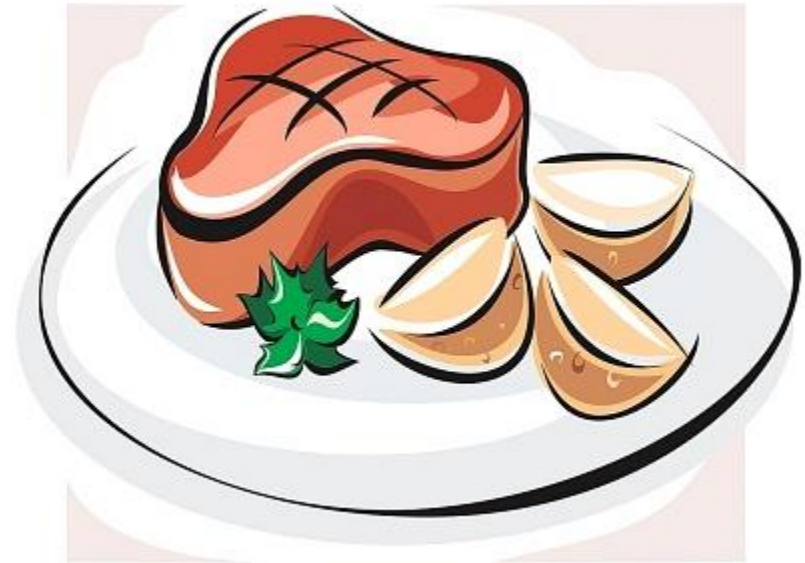
LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

First-year writing program

Students required to take English 161

225 instruction sessions (meat and potatoes of our program)

7 full-time librarians, 3 part-time librarians



QUESTIONS

How do our first-year students learn the research skills they will need to be successful college students?

Are library instruction sessions making an impact?

What can we change about instruction to make a more meaningful and sustained impact?

OUR STUDY

Research habits of first-year students

STUDY DATA

- 4 sections with same professor
- 70 annotated bibliographies & bibliographies from final papers
- 4 research journals (278 total; 56 completed all 4)
- 9 student Interviews



data (scrabble) cc: @justgrimes <https://www.flickr.com/photos/notbrucelee/8016192302>

DATA ANALYSIS

Created rubric for annotated and final bibliographies

- Rubric Assessment of Information Literacy Skills (RAILS)
- Looked for types of sources used, quality of sources, variety, etc.

Coded research journals

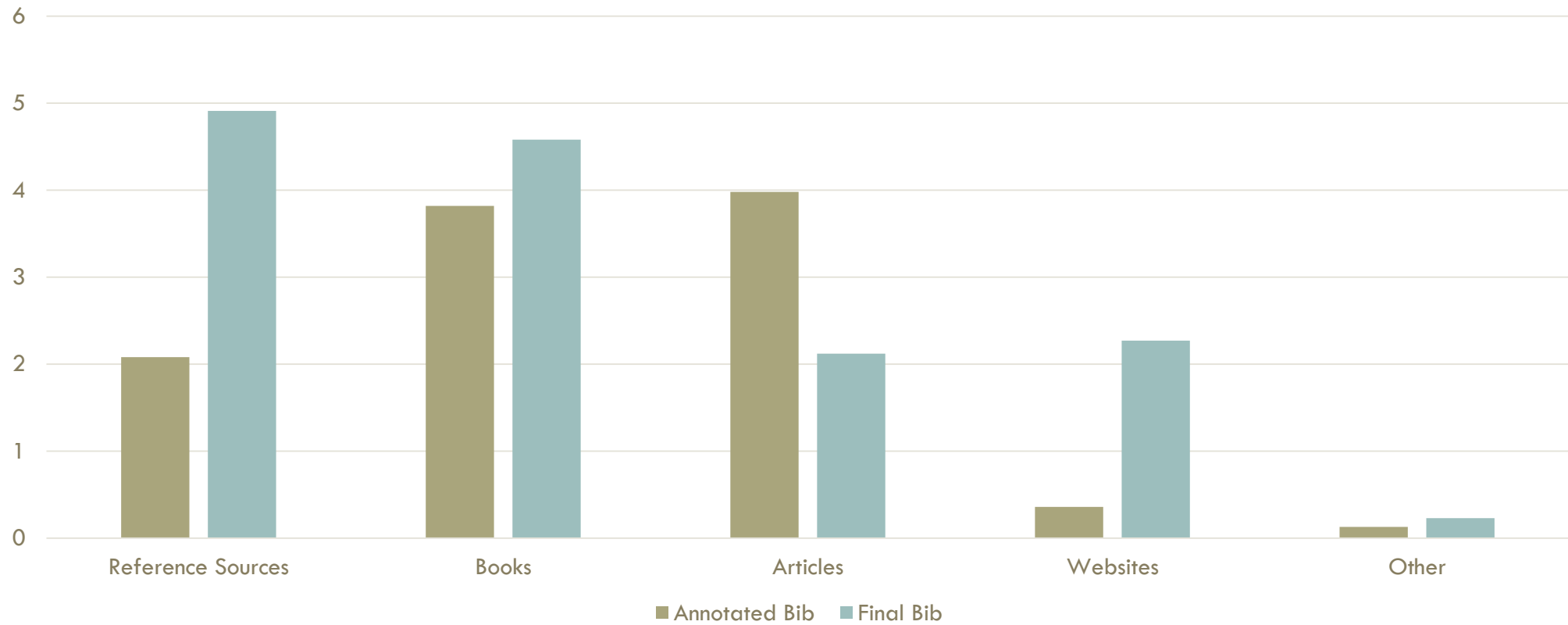
Still coding interviews

RESULTS

Score category	Annotated bibliography	Final bibliography	Percent change
Quality of sources	2.84	2.51	-11.62%
Variety of sources	2.40	2.47	2.92%
Annotations	2.39	NA	NA
Citation accuracy	2.40	2.09	-12.92%

RESULTS

Types of sources used



STUDENT CHALLENGES

“I felt the most challenging part of the process was determining which articles to use in my paper and what information to pull out from each article.”

“The most challenging thing is to infuse the knowledge and information from my sources with my own ideas.”

“Picking the right ones and pulling out the correct lines, information, etc. will be the problem.”

“Knowing what to look for was hard. Then, once I figured out what I needed to look for, I couldn't understand what I was reading.”

INTERSECTIONS

Exploring common ground

DISCIPLINE SIMILARITIES

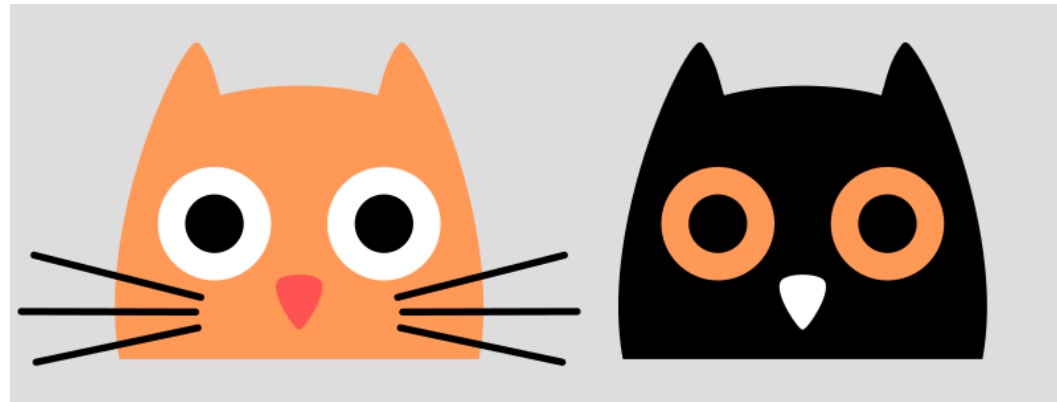
Fister (1992) saw many similarities between comp and IL:

Skills-based, rather than content-based

Attempt to make academia make sense to newcomers

Interdisciplinary nature

Process-oriented



WE FEAR THE SAME THINGS

I experienced a nightmare vision...students were everywhere...[and] they were all writing RESEARCH PAPERS...When the students were not talking, they were transcribing sections of encyclopedia text into the text of their own writing, into their notebooks. I knew they were writing research papers because they were not writing at all—merely copying. I imagined, then, that they saw their purpose as one of lifting and transporting textual substance from one location, the library, to another, their teachers' briefcases. Not only were they not writing, but they were not reading: I detected no searching, analyzing, evaluating, synthesizing, selecting, rejecting, etc. No time for such reading in the heated bursts of copying that interrupted the conversations. The horror. The horror.

-Kleine (1987, as cited by Fister, 1993)

WRITING INFORMATION LITERACY

“Information literacy informed by work in rhetoric and composition would help yield a more situated, process-oriented literacy relevant to a broad range of rhetorical and intellectual activities.”

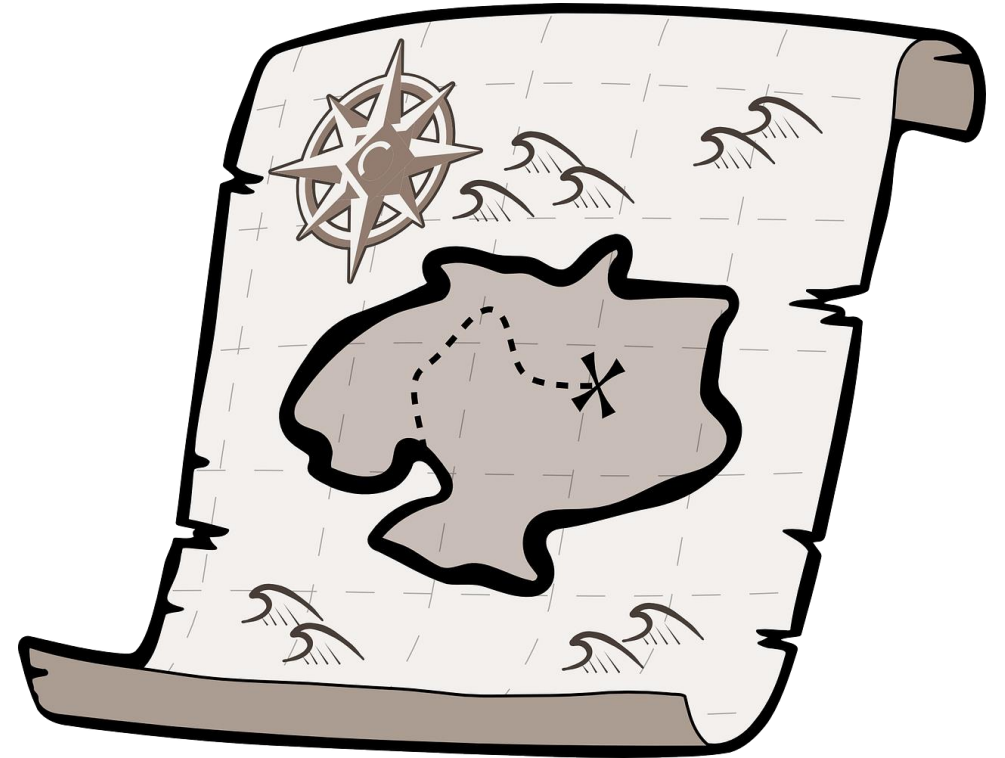
“...any literacy is always an embedded or situated cultural practice conditioned by ideology, power, and social context.”

-Norgaard (2003)

PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES

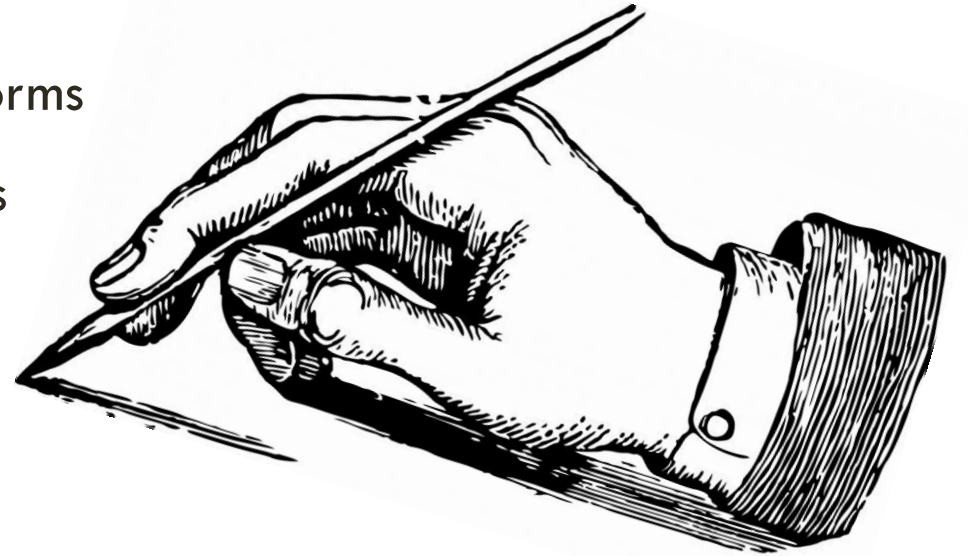
ACRL's *Framing the Framework Series* (2015)

- Maid & D'Angelo mapped IL Framework to CWPA Outcomes Statement
- Witek & Grettano mapped IL Framework to CWPA's Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing



THRESHOLD CONCEPTS OF WRITING STUDIES

1. Writing is a social and rhetorical activity
2. Writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms
3. Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies
4. All writers have more to learn
5. Writing is (also always) a cognitive activity



Adler-Kassner, L. & Wardle, E. (Eds.). (2015) *Naming what we know: Threshold concepts of writing studies*. Boulder, CO: University of Colorado Press.

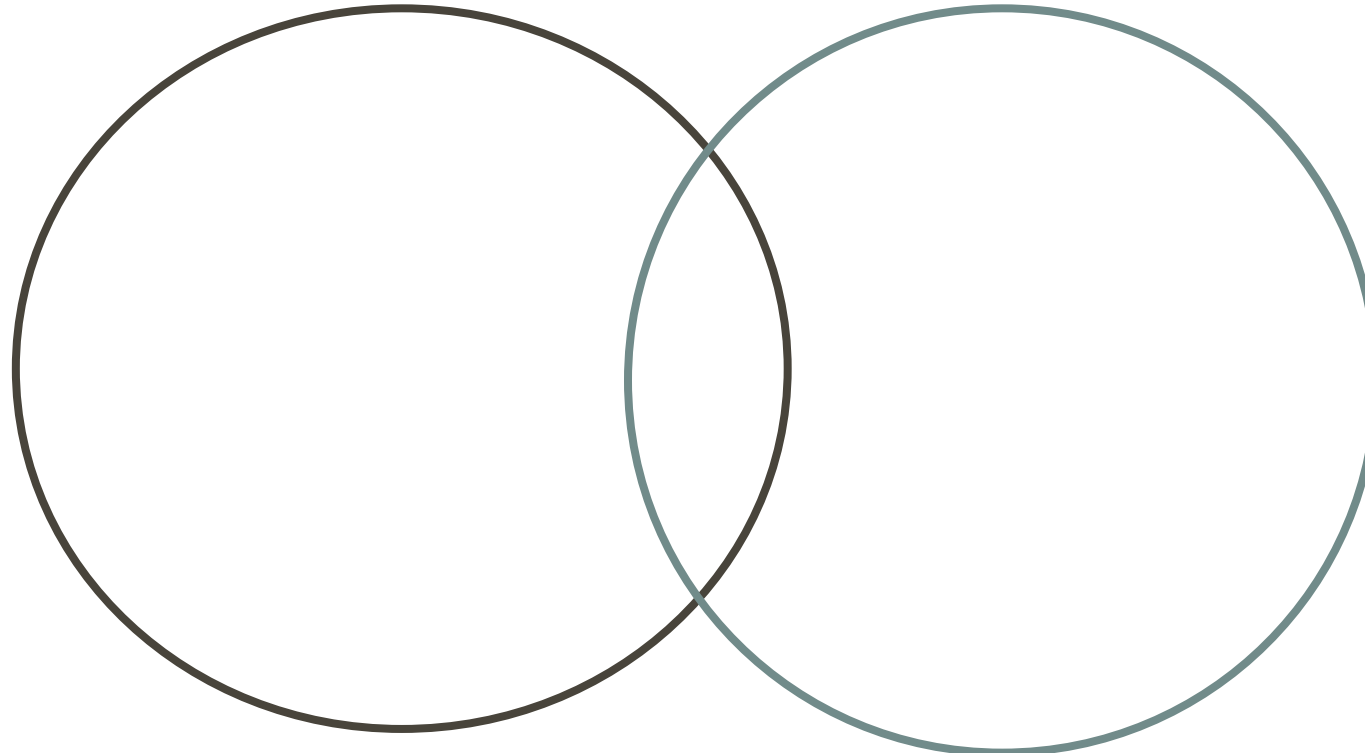
IN PRACTICE

What can we do?

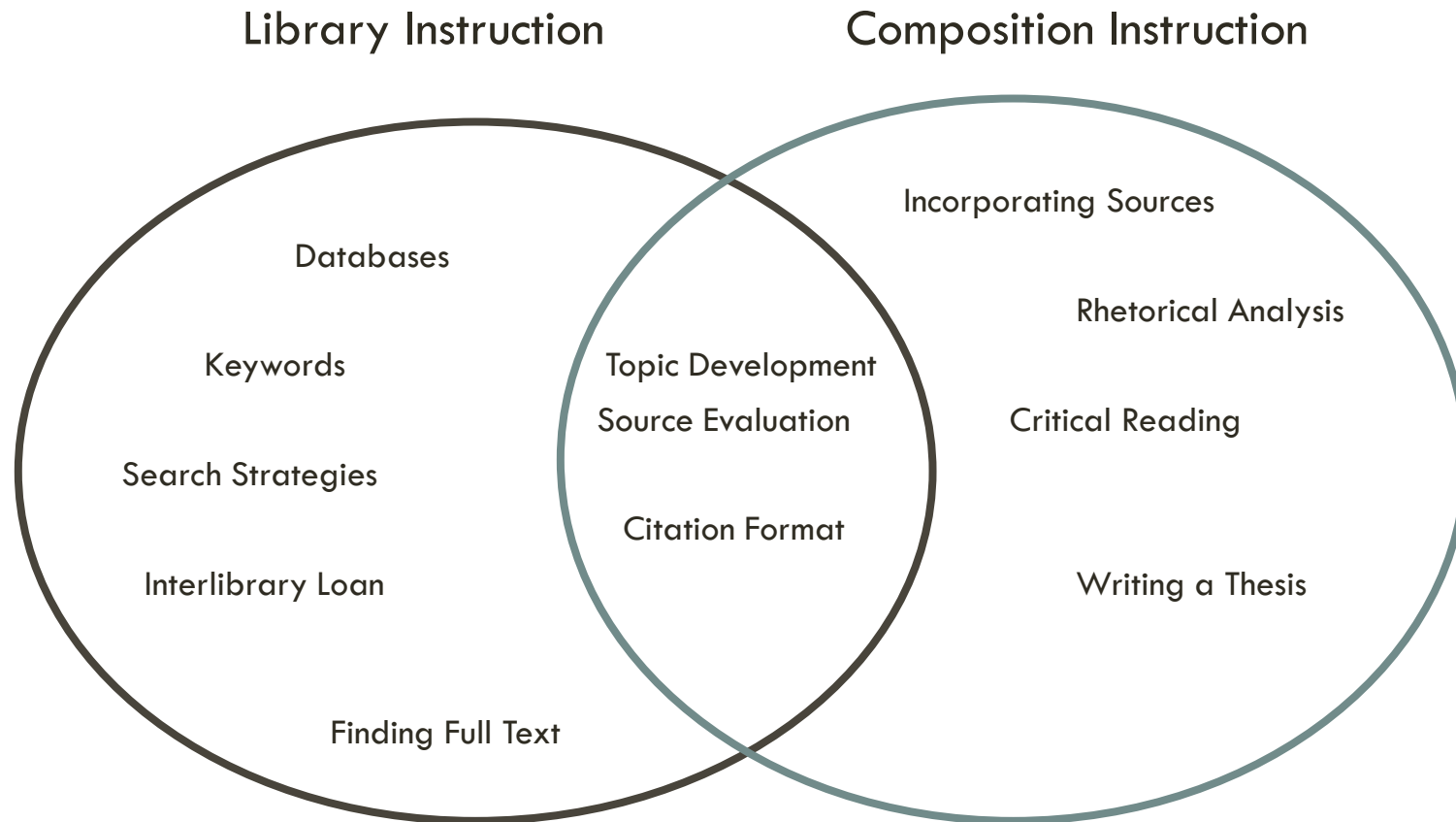
FINDING OVERLAP: WHO TEACHES WHAT?

Library Instruction

Composition Instruction



OUR MODEL



MEETING WITH INSTRUCTORS

Questions Asked:

- Where do students get stuck?
- What kinds of sources do you require?
- What challenges do students have incorporating sources?
- What have you noticed about student citation skills?

INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

“Hit-and-run” quoting as opposed to building a “quotation sandwich”

Difficulty paraphrasing sources

Trouble comprehending sources

Patchwork research rather than meaningful engagement with sources

Rampant citation errors



STEPS TAKEN

Offered drop-in “research clinics” and additional library sessions at pivotal points in the semester

Bolstered English 161 LibGuide to represent more aspects of the research process

Shared findings with first-year writing director and instructors

Surveyed comp instructors regarding library instruction program

NEXT STEPS

Share findings with library instruction team and plan group work on research guide, supplemental activities and learning objects

Articulate willingness to collaborate on teaching skills outside of our traditional/habitual roles

Develop and promote menu of instructional activities focused on reading, analyzing, paraphrasing, and citing sources

Assess new activities, learning objects, and programmatic changes, reporting back to and continuing the conversation with instructors

FINAL THOUGHTS

Building relationships and assessing new approaches
both take time

What has worked for you?

Minor tweaks?

Major overhauls?



QUESTIONS

Comments?