Abstract

The Information Literacy Course Enhancement Program (ILCEP) was applied in Public Economics (ECON 441) at WVU Tech in Fall semester, 2012. Public Economics examines the role of government in a market economy, especially the roles of taxation and government spending. Course enhancement goals were to induce students to spend more time in the library and to improve information literacy by identifying better sources and improving student search strategies. Methods to achieve this included in-library instruction and student-librarian help sessions. Outcomes were measured by changes in "source quality" in three successive 1,000 word papers. Results showed clear improvement over the semester.

The Class

- Public Economics (Econ 441)
- 14 students
- Required for many Social Science Majors
- Delivered in traditional setting with E-campus add-on
- Content: Why and how do governments collect taxes and how do governments spend the money?

Goals

- Induce students to spend more time in the library
- Improve information literacy by identifying better sources and by teaching better search strategies

Methods used to achieve goals

- Combine teacher and librarian to form instructional team
- Add library instruction periods
- Require out-of-class time for student-librarian meetings
- Change assessment strategy from tests to short (1,000 word) papers
- Measure information literacy change

Measurements

- Source quality is the property to measure
- Source quality yardstick:
  - 1: popular press, e.g., HowThingsWork.com
  - 2: respected, not peer reviewed, e.g., Wall Street Journal, The Economist
  - 3: peer reviewed or scholarly, e.g., Brookings white paper

Measurements

- Improvement in source quality was evident (mean, standard deviation)
  - Paper 1: (1.58, 0.65)
  - Paper 2: (1.85, 0.74)
  - Paper 3: (2.10, 0.76)

- Other Changes
  - Unexpected growth in the number of sources used
  - Affective growth: increased appreciation for search techniques shown

Book Requests — Supplemental Readings