



Chapter 3

Connecting Student Success and Library Services

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Context

The University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM) is a regional campus of the University of South Florida (USF) system with an enrollment of approximately 2,000 students. As of the 2015–2016 academic year, USF Sarasota-Manatee has 1,801 undergraduate students, 182 graduate students, and 88 non-degree-seeking students. The campus employs 85 full-time faculty and 62 adjuncts in addition to 12 graduate assistants, 53 student assistants, and 129 administrative and staff positions.¹ Library staffing consists of two librarians and two part-time employees. The USFSM campus does not have its own physical library, but students, faculty, and staff have access to the physical and electronic collections of the USF Library System, which serves over 50,000 students over its three campuses.

In September 2013, USFSM hired a new Faculty Coordinator of Library Services, Diane Fulkerson, to oversee and improve the library services offered on the campus. One area determined to be in need of significant improvement was library instruction. Unfortunately, few statistics were available to determine library instruction coverage for dates prior to Fulkerson's appointment, and assessment data was missing. This missing information posed an immediate concern for Fulkerson as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Value of Academic Libraries* report stresses the importance

for academic and research libraries to develop documentation to demonstrate their value to their respective institutions.² With this in mind, improvement plans were immediately set in place, and spring semester of 2014 offered the first full semester of opportunities to promote library instruction to faculty.

At the time Fulkerson was hired to oversee library services at USFSM, the campus did not have a library instruction program in place. As the campus's sole librarian, she began building the instruction program by soliciting faculty to voluntarily include library instruction sessions within their courses. At USFSM, faculty request library instruction for their classes; in-class library instruction is not mandated. At the start of each semester, an email is sent to all faculty, including adjuncts, inviting them to include a library instruction session for their class. Spring semester of 2014 resulted in ten instruction sessions, reflecting faculty who understood the value of including a library instruction session for their course. This small number of instruction sessions, led by a solo librarian, was a crucial first step to building a well-regarded library instruction program at USFSM. The number of sessions has continued to grow each semester following these first sessions.

At present, USFSM has two librarians actively involved in library instruction. The basic assessment process developed from the first sessions in 2014 has remained consistent to today. At the end of each instruction session, students complete an anonymous "one-minute paper" evaluation. The librarian or the professor collects the one-minute paper at the end of the session. In these evaluations, students provide written feedback to the presenting librarian with answers to three prompts: three things they learned during the session; a personal reflection on how they will incorporate what they learned into their studies; and a final question using a five-point Likert scale (strongly agree to strongly disagree) to indicate they understand what was taught during the session. The Likert scale is shown in figure 3.1.

I am confident I understand most of the material presented in this session.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Figure 3.1

Likert scale used in "one-minute paper" assessment.

The USFSM librarians continued to collect the evaluation forms every semester and used the responses to make immediate improvements to instruction. For example, as evidenced in figure 3.2, a breakdown by percentages indicated the majority of students strongly agree or agree they are confident they understand most of the material presented in the library instruction session. Once the librarians were able to determine

the percentage of students who felt they understood the material covered in library instruction sessions, the librarians were able to confirm that library instruction sessions were effective.

I am confident I understand most of the material presented in this session

1,300 responses

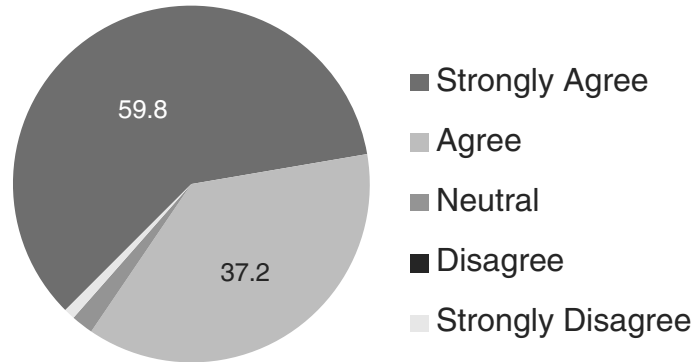


Figure 3.2

Student confidence findings from “one-minute paper” assessments.

However, the librarians were still unsure how to analyze the results more formally to determine long-term trends. Semester improvements were implemented by the librarians; much of the qualitative data was used anecdotal. The completed evaluation forms sat in a box until the librarians could determine how to best analyze the results.

Due to the qualitative nature of students’ responses, the data needed coding prior to analysis. A small librarian staff and limited funding meant that creative exploration of options was necessary. USF has an institutional license for ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis software; however, it proved to be extremely time-consuming to code the data using the ATLAS.ti software. The librarians found the solution in a 2016 article by Vaughn and Turner: how a thematic coding scheme and SurveyMonkey software could be used to analyze qualitative data.³

Inspired by this article, the USFSM librarians created a survey in Google Forms to code the data. Based on a review of the handwritten student assessments, the librarians created broad thematic categories to code the data. The broad thematic categories used included both items and actions, such as databases, citations, critical thinking, and evaluating sources. The coding for the data was fairly basic, based on the free responses from students who attended the instruction session. A small sample of the broad categories is provided in figure 3.3. Using these broad categories allowed for quicker processing of the assessment forms.

Three things you learned

- Databases Developing research question
- Searching Truncation
- RefWorks Find It@USF
- Keywords Citations

Figure 3.3

Thematic categories for coding “one-minute paper” responses.

An analysis of the survey responses indicated databases and developing search strategies were two of the top three things students learned in our library instruction sessions. Table 3.1 lists the top ten responses from the assessment forms.

Table 3.1

Top Ten Responses in Rank Order

Databases	55.5%
Searching	56%
Accessing Library Resources	29.3%
RefWorks	25.9%
ILL	14.7%
Evaluating Sources	14.6%
Citations	14.1%
Library Services @ USFSM	11.6%
Peer-Reviewed Articles	9.2%
Find It@USF	7.5%

The librarians manually entered the information from each of the one-minute paper evaluations. This was the most time-consuming part of the project as there were only two librarians to input the three-year backlog of data; however, the creation of the survey made data entry much easier and faster. With all of the historical data processed, staff now enters data from current instruction sessions immediately following each session. To date, the Google Forms survey contains almost 1,400 evaluation entries. Starting from the small number of sessions (ten) in the inaugural semester, the number of instruction sessions each year has grown. USFSM averages thirty-three instruction sessions per academic year with an average of 457 student participants. Table 3.2 lists the data for the academic years 2013–2016.

Table 3.2

2013–2016 Data by Academic Year, Sessions, and Participants

Academic Year	Number of Sessions	Number of Participants
2013–14	32	450
2014–15	31	378
2015–16	35	544

Overall, Google Forms proved to be a tool well-suited to the needs of this project. It is currently free for use; functional for multiple users working simultaneously; and, like Survey Monkey, provided the capability for an in-depth analysis of the data, which could be shared with university stakeholders, including USFSM's Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE).

In addition to the one-minute paper evaluation data, the librarians created a supplemental spreadsheet to record the course information, course reference number, date and time of the instruction session, librarian who taught the session, professor teaching the course, material covered in the session, and number of students in attendance. Due to privacy concerns, librarians do not take attendance to indicate presence of specific students at instruction sessions, and students complete the assessment form anonymously. Table 3.3 shows a sample of the data shared with OIRE.

Table 3.3
Supplemental Course and Training Data Provided

Session date	CRN	Course	Section	Professor	Librarian	Content	Surveys completed
10/31/13	88501	ENL 3251		521 Cavedo	Fulkerson	Library databases and citations	8
1/4/14	23653	MAR 6158		521 Lennon	Fulkerson	Library databases for International Marketing and citations	6
1/6/14	17389	MAR 3823		591 Lennon	Fulkerson	Library databases for Marketing Research and citations	21
1/9/14	15880	CCJ 3701		521 Ngo	Fulkerson	Citations, library databases and annotated bibliography	14
1/14/14	13815	PSY 3213		521 Aurilio	Fulkerson	Concept mapping, developing a topic, and databases	16
1/16/14	23069	PSY 3213		522 Reich	Fulkerson	Developing a topic and databases	6
1/21/14	13028	CCJ 3024		591 Scott	Fulkerson	Developing a topic and databases	21
1/28/14	19766	ENG 4934		521 Lipscomb	Fulkerson	Databases	5
1/30/14	23467	EVR 2001		522 Freeman	Fulkerson	Environmental studies databases and developing a topic	32
1/30/14	23148	EVR 2001		521 Freeman	Fulkerson	Environmental studies databases and developing a topic	11

With coding completed, the USFSM librarians then explored how to make connections between library instruction and student success. On September 28, 2016, the librarians attended a webinar presented by Mary O'Kelly from Grand Valley State University wherein she discussed her quantitative research on the connection between student retention and library instruction. O'Kelly's study found the highest retention correlations in freshman and graduate student populations who received library instruction compared to those who did not receive any library instruction. By comparing three years of data (current enrollment, academic course \pm library instruction, and next semester enrollment), she demonstrated a small but statistically significant increase ($p = .0001$) in retention of students who received library instruction with their courses, with results continuing to grow in magnitude as the study continued. O'Kelly provided slides on the data collection, methodology, and results of the Grand Valley State University study to the attendees.⁴

Inspired to develop a similar study based on the quantitative data collected from the USFSM library instruction sessions, the USFSM librarians met with the USFSM OIRE to explore the possibility of replicating the study on the USFSM campus. After reviewing O'Kelly's protocol from the Grand Valley State University study and meeting with the librarians, the USFSM OIRE determined O'Kelly's study was statistically reliable and the USFSM librarians had collected the necessary comparative data to replicate the study using USFSM's reenrollment data, academic courses, and students who did and did not receive library instruction. We believe analysis of USFSM's quantitative data will show similar correlations to that at Grand Valley State University.

Communicating Results and Impact

The librarians scheduled a second appointment with two key players from USFSM OIRE, Laura Hoffman (Director) and Dr. Bonnie Jones (Assistant Vice President). During this meeting, Hoffman and Jones asked questions regarding the methods USFSM used to collect data about their instruction sessions. Hoffman also requested a detailed spreadsheet of supplementary information regarding the instruction sessions to complement the USFSM library's qualitative data. Using the historical information from Springshare's LibAnalytics (utilized from March 2016 to present) and Compendium's Desk Tracker (utilized from September 2013 through February 2016), librarians provided detailed library instruction data on course code, number, and section; professor name; librarian name; date; location; duration; content; and number of students present. The information provided by the librarians matched the data collected by OIRE. OIRE found this data especially appealing at this time as USFSM is poised to confer degrees upon its first class of first-time-in-college (FTIC) students. USFSM has tracked the FTIC students heavily since their enrollment at USFSM in fall 2013, and the information collected from the library sessions can be compared to the already collected OIRE data. OIRE is particularly interested in the FTIC student population as they are a first for the university, which has traditionally served only transfer student populations, and thus may be at greater risk for issues with persistence, timely completion, and retention. Comparing the information from library instruction sessions with other data points collected by OIRE will allow USFSM to establish a correlation between student retention and library instruction.

USFSM OIRE was very excited about the opportunity of working on the data analysis for this project. USFSM Library Services provides OIRE with the data and is not involved in the analysis, as OIRE already has institutional review board (IRB) approval to analyze student data and the staff to conduct the analysis. OIRE saw it as an extension of its work on assessment for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional body for accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the southern states, and meeting metrics of the Performance-Based Funding Model required by the State University System of Florida Board of Governors. The library instruction data, combined with a variety of data points the USFSM OIRE gathers each academic year, will help the university to create a more complete picture on how it may improve retention and continue to deliver necessary programs for students determined to be at-risk. The benefits to the USFSM campus could lead to additional funding through achievement of specific Performance-Based Metrics and increased retention through collaboration between Library Services and Student Services.

Leveraging the Findings

Using a process similar to the one used by O'Kelly,⁵ OIRE analysis is currently ongoing with no stated time line for completion. Once it is analyzed, the inclusion of the library assessment data with other OIRE reports will provide senior leadership with a better

understanding of the role of library instruction in student retention and help illustrate a potentially meaningful correlation between the library and student academic success.

As the USFSM campus continues to grow, this data will support expanding Library Services to increase the depth of available services. As an example, one area of current university-wide concern surrounds engaging and supporting distance-learning students. Although USFSM offers a number of courses and programs online, Library Services currently has little interaction with the students in either discrete online courses or primarily online programs. USFSM librarians have created robust LibGuides to share with distance-learning students. These LibGuides are linked directly through Canvas LMS course modules by individual professors. In addition, librarians are available for one-on-one consultations virtually or face-to-face with students and faculty. Otherwise, interaction is limited.

The SACS *Principles of Accreditation*, which stress the importance of equitable access provided at the same level for distance-learning students and on-campus students,⁶ provide the impetus for our next study. Since USFSM Library Services hopes to continue to increase library instruction to online students, inclusion of data collected from participants in online library instruction sessions with face-to-face instruction sessions would assist USFSM librarians to determine next steps towards increasing valuable connections to students on and off campus. Further, comparison of outcomes of students who have library instruction in a face-to-face class versus online students who did not have an instruction session would help USFSM librarians advocate for the resources necessary to increase outreach to online faculty and students. The online instruction study, currently in its planning process, will use a similar model as our “one-minute paper” project and provide another component of a 360 degree assessment of the relationships between library instruction and student outcomes.

The one-minute paper requires students to identify the three most important concepts discussed in the library instruction session that are relevant to their research and how they will incorporate those ideas into their research. The majority of students indicate they will use the information shown during the instruction session for their research projects. Table 3.4 shows the five most common responses.

Table 3.4
Top Five “One-Minute Paper” Responses

Use information shown in class	45.2%
Research for course assignments	28.8%
Use databases shown in class	25.6%
Find reliable, useful, and credible sources	20.1%
How to cite information	14.4%

Students also identify concepts they did not completely understand and provide their contact information to schedule a research consultation. Our goal for the online “one-minute paper” study mirrors the face-to-face “one-minute paper” study: to determine if there is a correlation between students receiving library instruction and academic success. We will know more once OIRE has completed its analysis.

In addition, this type of data will help USFSM librarians play a larger role in meeting campus-wide strategic goals. The USFSM campus is in the implementation stage of its Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) with SACS; the focus of the QEP is critical thinking. The ACRL Assessment in Action (AiA) projects clearly demonstrate that student retention improves with library instructional services, which assists students in establishing critical-thinking and problem-based learning skills necessary for academic coursework.⁷

Data from the one-minute evaluation project and new library projects currently underway will make it possible for Library Services to work with campus administrators to develop and support campus strategic goals and initiatives to meet the Florida Board of Governors Performance Based Funding Metrics. Supporting the connection between academic libraries and the role of high-impact practices on student retention, Adam Murray states that library deans or directors “tend to view library instruction as the element of the academic library most involved in high-impact practices, particularly for learning communities and collaborative assignments and projects.”⁸

Results from this current study could provide USFSM Library Services with the opportunity and ability to integrate selected high-impact practices from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) into their library services and instruction. The USFSM librarians could collaborate with faculty to integrate library instruction into high-impact practices in writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, service learning and community-based learning, and capstone courses and projects.⁹ In addition to meeting student success goals for the campus, such as critical thinking, that data will reinforce the earlier evidence of the effectiveness of library instruction to improve student retention. This in turn can provide new opportunities to work with faculty to design course assignments and incorporate library instruction into their syllabi.

Reflection

The most challenging aspect of the project thus far was determining the best method to code the raw data. After a search of the literature, the article by Vaughn and Turner stood out as the best option for a study of this scope and a data set of this size. Creating an online survey with broad categories made it easier for librarians to enter, code, and analyze the data. Coding was a time-consuming effort, as two librarians took the initiative to input data from the three-year backlog. Slight variations of student handwriting and meaning of word choice were overcome by the librarians, who had worked together to develop an effective game plan. Vaughn and Turner described how they created a well-defined code dictionary with their project team in order to ensure consensus regarding the coding process.¹⁰ The small team processing the USFSM data did not require a full-scale code dictionary; rather, they created a robust controlled-vocabulary list in the Google Form. No matter the approach, this process showed the importance of having a small, dedicated contingent who have a full understanding of the goals of the project and the meaning of each code.

This study demonstrated the potential value of collecting qualitative assessment data from instruction sessions, even if there is not a specific plan yet in place on how to use that data or apply the findings. Though the qualitative survey information had not been collated formally and compared to other institutional data, librarians did not let the information go to waste. The librarians used the raw assessment data twice: first by reviewing the “one-minute papers” after every session to make immediate improvements following the specific instruction sessions, and then by saving the completed papers for further analysis, such as that of this ongoing study. Qualitative data is important to making short- and long-term improvements to services and programs. It often provides additional information not easily obtained through quantitative data. Qualitative data provides researchers with information regarding beliefs, values, feelings, and motivations that underlie behaviors, whether these behaviors reflect information-seeking models, information behavior models, or critical-thinking models. Qualitative data may also help illuminate the relationships between cognitive processes, actions, and knowledge acquisition.¹¹

ACRL’s *Value of Academic Libraries* report notes, “In many cases, data exists that can link libraries to retention and graduation rates, but these correlations are not easily investigated.”¹² A review of the literature indicates there is not a standard tool kit of evaluation and outcomes measures by which libraries collect and evaluate nonnumerical data related to library services. Thorpe, Lukes, Bever, and He suggest that standardization across library institutions could prove beneficial to understanding the continued impact of our work on student success.¹³ Standardizing data collection would help academic libraries replicate studies that focus on the library’s role in student success. Steven Scheuler in his article states, “By actively participating in assessment initiatives, librarians can offer their services and improve student engagement in higher education.”¹⁴

The study and analysis of qualitative library assessment gathered by the USFSM librarians and analyzed by OIRE will help Library Services to expand its collaboration with Student Services and Student Engagement. As stated previously, this is slated to be an ongoing study. For the USFSM librarians to have the ability to run analyses with discrete student, course, and registration data may require specific permissions and training that may require negotiation with OIRE and the Registrar’s Office, among others.

Recently, the campus created a Persistence Committee to reach out to at-risk students who are in jeopardy of being placed on academic probation or not persisting toward timely graduation; campus focus thus far has been on the aforementioned FTIC population. Library Services is a member of the committee, and other members of the committee refer students who need research assistance to the librarians for additional support. Participation in this committee helps Library Services to connect with students but also indicates that the campus understands the value of the services it provides to students.

OIRE is currently most interested in following the data from the fall 2013 FTIC cohort. Future research opportunities include evaluating the success of upper-level students completing capstone courses within their major, comparing those who did

and did not receive library instruction. Including the capstone courses would provide an additional level of analysis with our FTIC cohort because students in the cohort in all likelihood had library instruction in their lower-level classes.

Many of the senior seminars at USFSM include a capstone project that includes a research component. Faculty teaching the senior seminars, especially in the social sciences, frequently include a library session as part of their classes. While many of the students may have had previous library instruction, the faculty understands the importance of additional instruction sessions for the course to focus on the capstone project. They feel it is essential for students to have a “refresher” instruction session to help them develop their topics and identify resources. As stated previously, including capstone projects in the analysis will provide the USFSM librarians the opportunity to integrate high-impact practices into courses and library instruction and to assess the pedagogical components of library instruction.

Even though the “one-minute paper” project is a work in progress, it serves as an example of analyzing data from library instruction sessions to determine a correlation between student retention and library services. The USFSM study replicates the work of Mary O’Kelly at Grand Valley State University on a smaller scale that did not require any financial resources. It was time-consuming to input the data from the one-minute papers, but it resulted in the librarians being able to use the data to develop future studies and directions for the library instruction program. This study also provides OIRE with additional data to track the retention of the campus’s first cohort of FTIC freshman students.

Librarians at USFSM see this as an opportunity to share their work with other librarians who may be in a similar situation with qualitative data but unsure how to analyze it in order to make the connection between the value of library instruction and student success. At USFSM, the librarians will be able to expand their role in student success initiatives taking place on campus. It will also provide opportunities to support key initiatives from the campus strategic plan. Further, the campus Library Services can position themselves to increase and solidify their role as an integral part of the campus.

Although the review of current literature indicates much of the research on academic libraries and student retention examines various service points throughout the library, there are a small number of articles focused on student retention and library instruction. The study from Grand Valley State University Libraries is one of a few studies focused specifically on connecting library instruction and student retention. Replicating the Grand Valley study at USFSM provides smaller institutions with a how-to guide to replicate the study at their campus. The librarians at USFSM continue to collect data from their instruction sessions and forward it to OIRE. After the data is analyzed, it will be shared with the senior leadership at USFSM in addition to our Student Services office that oversees student retention, progression, and graduation. More importantly, we are exploring ways in which our data may be incorporated into additional institutional initiatives. Studies of this nature give libraries the ability to provide campus administrators with the data to indicate the relevance and importance of academic libraries and librarians in the twenty-first century.

Notes

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11. Mariaelena Bartesaghi and Ardis Hanson, “Understanding Social Networking: The Benefit of Discourse Analysis,” in *Using Qualitative Methods in Action Research: How Librarians Can Get to the Why of Data*, ed. Doug Cook and Lesley Farmer (Chicago: Association of College and Research Libraries, 2011), 47–63.
12. Association of College and Research Libraries, *Value of Academic Libraries*, 14.
13. Angie Thorpe, Ria Lukes, Diane J. Bever, and Yan He, “The Impact of the Academic Library on Student Success: Connecting the Dots,” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 16, no. 2 (April 2016): 388.
14. Steven Andrew Scheuler, “Retention and Student Success: An Action Plan for Academic Librarians,” *Library Leadership and Management* 30, no. 2 (2015): 4.

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