Jennifer M. Brady and Susan Kromrie

Creating a self-paced library orientation and information literacy module

Providing access to library resources at the point of need

Southwest Baptist University is a small, liberal arts university in the Midwest with four campus locations. The information literacy program has traditionally been handled on a class-by-class basis whenever a professor would invite a librarian to do a one-shot session. However, this was not the comprehensive plan that the library faculty wanted for our libraries and students.

During the 2014-15 academic year, the information literacy librarian, along with members of the General Education Committee, worked out Program Level Student Learning Outcomes (PLSLOs) to cover all levels of learning using the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Even though these PLSLOs were a step toward a comprehensive program, a librarian was required to oversee the program and its success depended on professors allowing us to work with them on assignments and assessment. The PLSLOs also did not address how we could provide information literacy instruction to campus locations that did not have a librarian, nor how to support online students. When the information literacy librarian position was not approved to be filled in 2016, this model languished.

In 2017, and again in 2020, the University Libraries was forced to severely reduce the two smaller branch campus libraries and remove the staff from those locations. This left an ever-widening gap between those students with access to library services and those who did not. Even though a librarian went to one of the campuses a couple of times a year, this was just not really supporting all the students.

Brainstorming

The question of how to help the distance and online students came up often during faculty meetings. There were lots of ideas, but few successes. Since librarians were not invited to most of these classes, we were left waiting for the students to contact us when they needed help. The library faculty were also concerned with how we would provide information literacy instruction to students at our main campus, since the loss of the information literacy librarian resulted in us no longer being asked into the freshman seminar classes.

As we all knew, the one-shot sessions were not ideal, since the students learn best at the point of need and unless there was an assignment that was directly tied to the library instruc-

Jennifer M. Brady, formerly of Southwest Baptist University, is now head librarian for reference, research, and instruction at Creighton University, email: jenniferbrady@creighton.edu, and Susan Kromrie is acquisition and collection development librarian, retired, email: skromrie@sbuniv.edu, at Southwest Baptist University.

tion, students tended to tune out. We considered a credit or even a non-credit course to teach information literacy, but library faculty were not able to get faculty or administrative support. Additionally, there was the consensus that unless it was required, students wouldn't sign up.

During this time, most of our instruction came in the form of research guides created using Springshare's LibGuides. They were easy to use, met the students at their point of need, and could be tailored for each class. The disadvantage was they were haphazard: some classes used them, some did not. The research guides were not leading students systematically through information literacy, nor were they following a template. This resulted in information being in different positions in different guides.

After several updates to the website, as well as updates to EBSCO databases, the instructional videos used with the research guides became outdated. As we started planning the who, when, and how of recreating the videos, the idea of a more comprehensive course was raised again. Since the information literacy librarian position had still not been approved, the Springfield Campus library director and digital services librarian (hereafter referred to as "the developers") decided to take on the development of this project.

Development process

After years of talking about what faculty wanted in a library orientation course, the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic fast-tracked the reality of needing, and creating our library orientation LibGuide. When assessing the products that the library already owned, or were available to use for free, there were several factors that the library faculty took into consideration: ease of use for consumers, longevity of product, ease of coding for faculty/staff, and ability to collect statistics for long- term tracking. The library faculty decided to use the Springshare suite of products, as they were a product the library was already purchasing. Added benefits were that the faculty were familiar with the product, links for the orientation and assessment could easily be disseminated, the product suite had several options for collecting data and running reports, and based on our investigation, nothing was found about sunsetting any of the products we were considering using in the suite.

From the Springshare suite, the decision was made by the developers to use LibGuides and forms and surveys from LibWizard to create the self-paced library orientation and information literacy modules. The modules were created based on the library competencies covered in an introductory library orientation session. The overall design and flow of the library orientation content was drawn from the library website; seminars, and workshops, and conferences on best practices; and professional development attended on online library instruction. Existing library orientation videos were re-recorded in Panopto, another university-owned resource, to be short, single topic recordings that were ADA compliant.

The goal of the modules within the library orientation was to design a learning component that was interactive, providing not only skill development but a review quiz for self-assessment. At the conclusion of the library orientation, students are asked to rate their confidence in each competency as well as to reflect on how their understanding of these competencies might affect their work as a student, evaluating their self-efficacy in using the library resources. Finally, the library has included a LibWizard survey at the completion of each competency that can be emailed to the students. The student can then upload the email to Blackboard or forward it to the instructor, should the instructor choose to use the library orientation or its modules as part of their course.

Collecting stats/feedback

Since the self-paced library orientation and information literacy modules were created using LibGuides and forms and surveys from LibWizard, statistics and feedback were able to easily be collected. The questions on the library orientation module were aligned with the library's PLSLOs to allow for consistent tracking with one-shot sessions or to embed information literacy sessions where lesson plans were created and assessment was conducted. For example, PLSLO 1.C. states, "The student will be able to modify search strategies for his/her information need." During an information literacy session, students complete a post-instruction multiple-choice quiz where a question as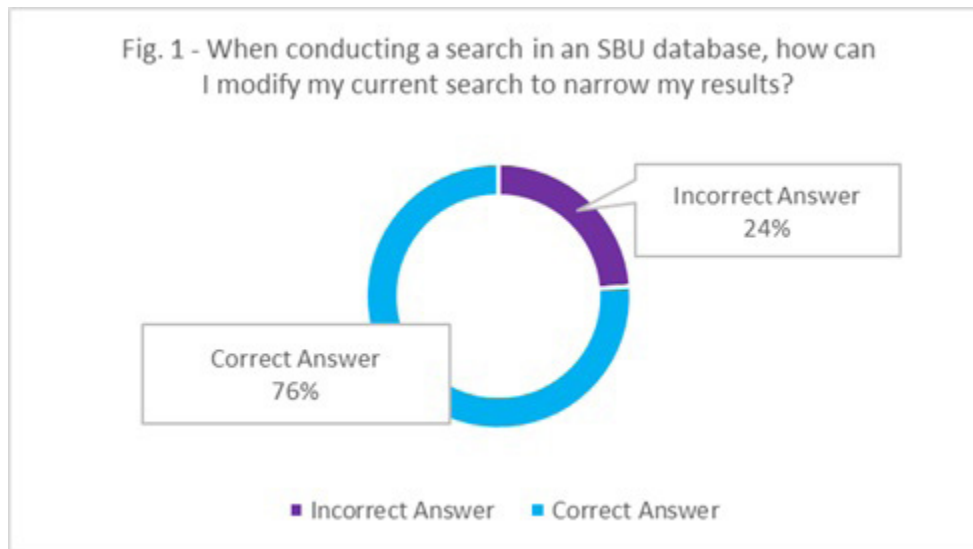ks, "When conducting a search in an SBU database, how can I modify my current search to narrow my results?" From May 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021, 76% of students, or 32 out of 42 were able to answer this question correctly (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Results from post-instruction multiple-choice quiz.

The library orientation assessed PLSLO 1.C during the same time frame asking the question, "How do Boolean operators help you search more effectively?" In the online orientation, every student answered the question correctly (Fig. 2).

This 37% increase in student accuracy compared to a similar question in the information literacy session assessment is encouraging for the online information literacy model.

The self-paced model allows students to use learning formats in which they are comfortable, repeat concepts in which they struggle, and learn in the environment they are most comfortable. One of the final assessments of the library orientation allows the students to provide their self-efficacy in using the library resources after completing the online modules. From May 1, 2020, to April 30, 2021, one question was evaluated, "I am comfortable describing how I modified my search to find better information for my assignment." This question has a Likert Scale of *strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree,* and *strongly agree.* Out of the 46 students who responded to the question during the survey period, 45 report that they *agree* or *strongly agree.* Having this increased self-efficacy in research skills post online orientation was supported by statements such as "[T]he skills that I learned will help me have better research and more effective studies," "[T]he skills covered in the orientation I think will make it easier for me to do more efficient research when looking for scholarly articles," and "It will enhance [my research skills] because I didn't know half of these resources existed." Within LibGuides, library faculty can track guide, page, and asset statistics for reporting purposes for the overall library orientation guide. Using the statistics feature, data can be run for a certain time

frame, eliminating the need to reset counters. By using the referrer URL feature, the library faculty can track how certain assets or pages are being accessed. For example, if university faculty are linking the library orientation in their LMS courses, the library faculty will see a URL referrer from the LMS, but not t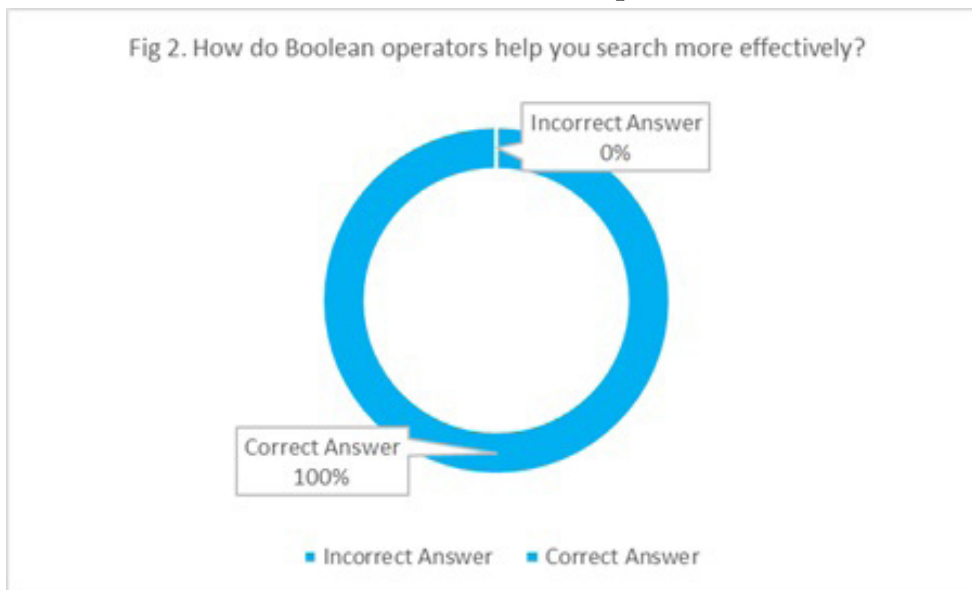he specific instructor. The statistics feature has been a huge selling point for implementing the library orientation into programs that have library requirements for accreditation. By being able to track usage, programs can provide statistical evidence to accrediting bodies of how many students completed the library orientation. Additionally, colleges that offer programs where students persist from associate's through graduate degrees will be able, if equipped, to track a student's self-efficacy or information competency.

Fig. 2. Results of post-instruction quiz question on Boolean operators.

Each of the self-assessment quizzes at the end of the self-paced library orientation and information literacy modules were built as a LibWizard form, providing instant feedback. The learning curve on creating the forms and surveys in LibWizard was higher than initially desired. However, there are a considerable number of tutorials that can be found for free, making the process less painful. Answers submitted through these forms allow exporting for sorting, cross tab analysis, and advanced filtering for reporting. Again, data can be filtered by date, so forms do not need to be reset after reporting periods. Once the library orientation LibGuide was created and tested, the questions remained, which courses or programs to partner with, and how do we let students on a campus without a librarian or taking courses remotely know about the new resource.

During fall 2021, the library orientation course was made available online, and the librarians spread the word through emails or by word of mouth to faculty who might use the resource. The desire to provide statistical evidence to the accrediting bodies led the SBU College of Health Professions' nursing, radiology, health science, and physical therapy programs to be the first to integrate the library orientation into their online orientation course starting in the spring 2022 semester.

Moving forward

In addition to the ease of getting statistics, and the benefit for our students, we anticipate that professors will benefit from this new library orientation LibGuide, as well. Instructors will be able to add the link to the orientation into their LMS course, enabling them to have students take the orientation and thus have a basic understanding of the library resources

without taking up class time. This orientation has been an expressed need from professors in upper-level classes who mistakenly believed students already knew how to use library resources. In the future, library faculty may plan additional modules for specific classes or disciplines.

Initially, the conversations among library faculty began due to needing to update outdated video content and housing formats. However, with the need to reach distance students, and then all students during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the library orientation project became much more important. This project became a way for the library to offer orientation, resources, and services to each student, in every program, no matter their home campus or their chosen modality. ✄