



Assessing First-Year Student Information Literacy Sessions for Lesson Development



Background:

Each fall, the University Library System (ULS) at the University of Pittsburgh provides over 65 introductory library sessions to first-year students enrolled in a first-year programs course. These sessions present a valuable opportunity to introduce foundational library and information literacy skills to first-year students.

Project leaders utilized evidence based curriculum development to adapt to a more relevant and engaging library lesson for the following year. The assignment and survey assessment influenced lesson design by incorporating new class objectives aligned with instructor feedback.

Goals:

Assessment of the 2016 and 2017 lesson aimed to determine relevant information literacy priorities through instructor feedback and measure student comprehension of related assignments. In both years, assessment results were used to update the following year's class objectives, pre-class tutorial, and in-class library lesson activities.

Methodology:

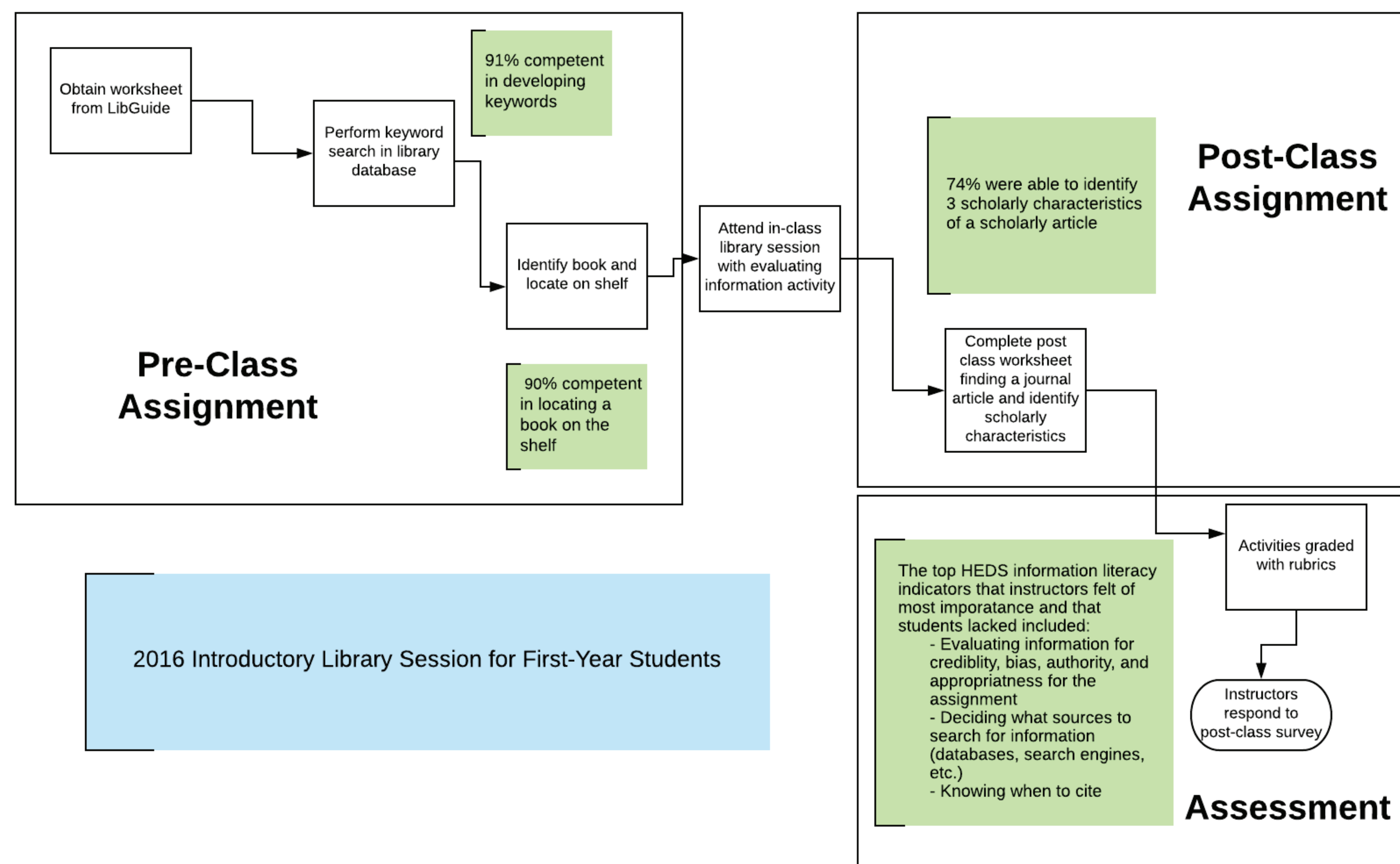
Pre-class tutorial:

A rubric measured a sample size of approximately 15% of 2016 pre and post class assignments and approximately 15% of 2017 pre-class assignments. The 2016 rubric measured outcomes within the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education while the 2017 rubric was adapted to knowledge practices within the Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education. More broadly, both assessments sought to measure effectiveness in introducing library catalog searching, locating material within the library, and evaluating scholarly information.

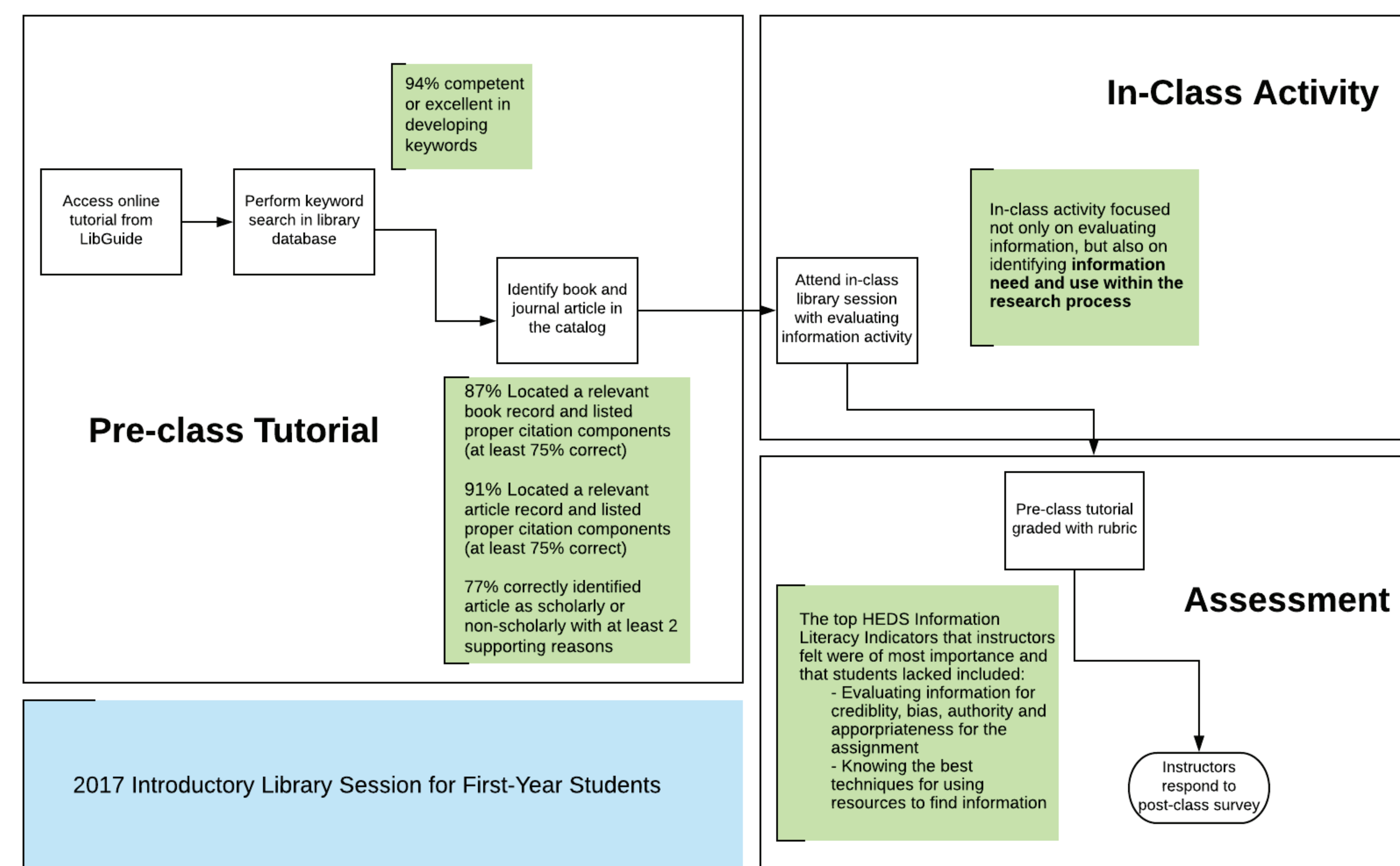
Instructor Survey:

Using HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium) Research Practice Survey Indicators, class instructors were surveyed regarding the primary information literacy skills that they felt were most important for first-year students as well as those they felt students lacked.

Pre-Assessment 2016 Assignment and Class Flow Chart



Post-Assessment 2017 Tutorial and Class Flow Chart



Findings:

- Students are comfortable with keyword searching and locating materials within the library
- In 2016, over 74% of sampled assignments showed competency in locating an article and identifying scholarly characteristics. This activity was completed after the class library visit.
- When the concept was introduced in the pre-class assignment in 2017, 77% of scored assignments showed correct identification of article (scholarly or non-scholarly) with at least 2 supporting reasons.
- In both years, instructors reported similar information literacy indicators that they felt were of importance and that students lack. These include evaluating information for credibility, bias, authority, and appropriateness for the assignment, deciding what sources to search for information (databases, search engines, etc.), and knowing when to cite.

Practical Implications:

2017 lesson enhancements shifted from a focus on finding and identifying scholarly information to identifying and evaluating information need and use from a spectrum of information sources. A shift in the lesson included:

- Creating an interactive pre-class tutorial as a flipped class.
- Moving pre-class assignment to online tutorial format, allowing for more robust data collection. This also changed the rubric.
- Eliminating the “locating a book on the shelf” activity allowing for more focus on catalog searching, citation information, and evaluating information introduction.
- Introducing a new in-class activity introducing both information need and evaluation, allowing for librarian feedback to increase student discussion and understanding that was previously missed on the second assignment.

Future Assessment:

Based on 2017 assessment, changes to the 2018 lesson included a pre and post tutorial assessment, more class time devoted to orientation materials, clarified in-class activity allowing for librarian assessment, and a student feedback mechanism.