

ANALYZING AND INTERPRETING 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

Analyzing and interpreting the HEDS Reach Practices Survey results

HEDS Research Practices Survey. The Research Practices Survey (RPS) is a fifteen-minute online multiple-choice questionnaire that provides data about students' experiences, dispositions, and proficiencies in conducting effective academic research in a liberal arts setting

Results/Data for 2008/2009

Fall 2008

Our participation rate for first year students in fall 2008 was 31% (participation was voluntary).

39 Liberal Arts Colleges participated.

Data collected was used to get a baseline of our first year students' research/library skills. More importantly, it will be used as a Pre-test and used to compare to Senior.

[http://libraryguides.albion.edu/assessment/Heds Results FYS 2008.xls](http://libraryguides.albion.edu/assessment/Heds%20Results%20FYS%202008.xls)

Spring 09

Our participation rate for seniors in spring 2009 was 24 % (participation was voluntary).

12 Liberal Arts Colleges participate (3 colleges response rates was under 10% and 2 were under 15%).

'09 seniors did not complete a Research Practice Survey as first year students, so we were not able to complete a Pre-test/Post-test evaluation.

[http://libraryguides.albion.edu/assessment/Heds Results Seniors 2009.xls](http://libraryguides.albion.edu/assessment/Heds%20Results%20Seniors%202009.xls)

However, we were able to compare our students' research abilities with other the liberal colleges.

On most questions in the survey, our seniors ranked 2-4 points lower than seniors at other liberal arts colleges who participated in the survey. However, we ranked much worse on a number of critical questions (especially the ones listed below.) The bright spot is that our seniors seemed to recognize their deficiencies because they tended to believe a course in research skills would be helpful. (Line 277).

Statistics with Significant Differences

Library Usage.

Line 11 "Use of the college library"

Once a week 37.7% vs. 59.3% Once-twice a month 37.7% vs. 29%... Few times a year 23.6% vs. 11.2%

Line 26 "Received library instruction" ---43.4% vs. 64.5%

Line 51 "Online sources used"—Indexes/Databases 76.6% vs. 86.1%

Line 91 "Sought advice from librarians" Never 41.1% vs. 23%

Line 119 "Used help screens, tutorials, etc." Never 60.7% vs. 68.2%

Line 127 "Talked with librarian about research" Never 62.6% vs. 41.5%

Line 199 "Challenge of indentifying/retrieving electronic index"

Very Easy 38.3% vs. 50.3% NO EXPERIENCE 13.1% vs. 3.1%

Line 227 "Obtaining materials thru ILL" No Experience 22.4% vs. 15.9%

Line 277 Beliefs about Research—"A course in research skills would be useful"

Strong Agree 31.8 vs. 16..... Agree 43.9% vs. 46.8%.... Disagree 22.4% vs. 32%

Line 319 "Boolean Search" Correct Answer 34.6% vs. 43.2%

Line 329 "Truncation" Correct Answer 24.3% vs. 41.45%

Line 406 "Identifying search strategy that yields most results Correct Answer 63.2% vs. 72.4%

Line 417 "Identifying peer-reviewed journals Correct Answer 67% vs. 81.5%

Line 471 "Distinguishing scholarly from non-scholarly" Correct Answer 69.5% vs. 79.8%

Line 512 distinguishing scholarly from non-scholarly" Correct Answer 30.2% vs. 15.4%

Results/Data for 2009/2010

Fall 2009

Our participation rate for first year students in fall 2009 was 32% (participation was voluntary).

18 Liberal Arts Colleges participated.

Data collected was used to get a baseline of our first year students' research/library skills. More importantly, it will be used as a Pre-test and used to compare to Senior.

<http://libraryguides.albion.edu/assessment/Heds> Results FYS 2009.xls

For most of the questions on the Research Practices Survey, our students scored a point or two lower than the average. However, several statistics are troubling. Our average on Questions #3, #4, #5, #9, and #13 were statistically significantly lower. It is important to note these questions revealed information about students' past experiences with research and included the types of resources and research tools they used in the past, their willingness to ask a teacher or librarian for help, etc. These numbers reinforce what librarians have observed for a number of years that the library and research skills of our students appear to be declining.

Spring 10

Our participation rate for seniors in spring 2010 was 29% (participation was voluntary).

8 Liberal Arts Colleges participated (at least one college's response rate was under 10%)

10 seniors did not complete a Research Practice Survey as first year students, so we were not able to complete a Pre-test/Post-test evaluation.

<http://libraryguides.albion.edu/assessment/Heds> Results Seniors 2010.xls

Our students' research abilities, for the most part, mirrored the results of last year's senior and we lag behind the other liberal colleges by 2-4 points. The questions that our seniors performed especially poor on last year, showed little to no improvement.

Library Usage.

`Line 38 "Received library instruction" ---45% vs. 62.5%

`Line 68 "Online sources used"—Indexes/Databases 76. % vs. 89%

`Line 102 "Sought advice from librarians" Never 53 vs. 29%

`Line 134 "Talked with librarian about research" Never 78% vs. 42%

`Line 199 "Challenge of indentifying/retrieving electronic index"

Very Easy 46% vs. 54.5% NO EXPERIENCE 11.5% vs. 7.4%

`Line 251 "Enjoyment of Research" Very Little 23.20% vs. 12%

`Line 225 "Obtaining materials thru ILL" No Experience 26.5 % vs. 10%

`Line 304 "Boolean Search" Correct Answer 37.20 % vs. 43.7%

`Line 316 "Truncation" Correct Answer 26.5% vs. 37.7%

`Line 403 Defining Peer Reviewed journal 61.60% vs. 79.20

Line 417 "Identifying peer-reviewed journals" Correct Answer 67% vs. 81.5%

Line 493 "Distinguishing scholarly from non-scholarly" Correct Answer 33.90 vs. 56.50%

Step 6: As noted above, the results from several colleges were generated from small samples (and this may have skewed their results in a positive way), but a number of other colleges had good response rates (over 30%). In any case, the spring 2009 HEDS Survey revealed that our seniors' scores were consistently at the low end of the scale. Furthermore, our seniors' test scores were especially low on a number of key information literacy skills (listed in the data collection part of this report). We shared the survey results and our concerns with the Library Committee on November 20, 2009. The Library Advisory Committee discussed the matter and came up with several good observations and suggestions. The Committee agreed that students need reinforcement with research strategies and that Information Literacy must be understood as a campus-wide concern and not something confined to the library. Finally, the Committee felt that Susan Connor should be made aware of the survey findings and scheduled a meeting with her.

The Library Advisory Committee met with Dr. Susan Connor about Information Literacy at Albion College. The Minutes of the Library Advisory Committee on February 5, 2010 include the following: "A report on information literacy meeting with Provost was made members who attended. There was clearly support for an information literacy program. Discussion focused on a proposal to the First Year Seminar Committee to encourage them to strengthen the IL component of the FYS. It was also suggested that the Committee discuss the need for a broader effort IL effort across the curriculum with CRC. There are assessment outcome issues that need definition, i.e. what should be known. It was also suggested that a matrix of progress (benchmarks) be constructed and that students could use this outcome as part of their resumes. Another area in addition to the FYS would be to focus on modes and category courses. It was mentioned that Cheryl Blackwell has already done a lot of work on this and that he work form the basis of a proposal to FYS Committee and CRC. It was urged that we should focus on FYS first"

In fall 2010, the library analyzed the spring 2010 Research Practices Survey data. It's worth noting that the Research Practices Survey scores for our seniors in spring 2010 were consistent with the result from the 2009 senior Research Practices Survey and consistently lower than the other liberal art colleges.

Cheryl Blackwell gave a sub-committee of the First Year Seminar Committee (that is revising criteria for FYS) some handouts on information literacy rubrics. Also, in an attempt to heighten campus (especially faculty) awareness of Information Literacy, the library posted our Information Literacy Plan to the library website.