Annotated Bibliography

General Research Sources

Examines common problems in statistical research, including poor definitions, flawed measurements, and weak sampling.


Offers a survey of common methods for assessing the use and usability of online collections and services. Describes the application, strengths, and weaknesses of assessment techniques that include surveys, focus groups, user protocols, and transaction log analysis. Extensive bibliography.

Addresses a number of problems common to statistical research, including sampling, survey questions, and experimental protocols.

Guides readers through basic statistical principles, definitions and methods. Discusses useful methods to test statistical significance. Provides examples using t-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Provides samples of research articles using a range of methodologies—case studies, narrative analyses, surveys, correlation studies, regression analysis studies, factor-analytic studies, discriminant analysis studies, two-condition experimental studies, single classification studies, factorial studies, and quasi-experimental studies—and evaluates both their methodologies and statistical treatments.

Describes various types of Web-based surveys, as well as potential problems in and strategies for their implementation.

Basic text that provides easy to understand explanations of statistical methods as well as sampling strategies and performance measures for libraries.

Chapter 7 addresses the research process.

Katzer, Jeffrey, Kenneth H. Cook, & Wayne W. Crouch. 1998. Evaluating information: A guide for users of social science research. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing. Describes various research methods, sampling and statistical techniques, and experimental considerations (such as observer effects), as well as generalizability, reliability, and validity.


Potter, W. James. 1996. An analysis of thinking and research about qualitative methods. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Covers a range of qualitative methodologies: ethnography; ethnomethodology; reception study; ecological psychology; symbolic interactionism; cultural studies; textual analysis; comparative illustrations. Addresses issues of evidence gathering, document examination, interviewing, and observation, as well as use of multiple methods. Also discusses descriptive, interpretive, explanatory, critical, or advocating reporting. Especially strong on problems of operationalization.

Sample Size Calculator. http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm. Calculator allows users to determine the “proper” sample size for a given population size and desired confidence level. Reverse calculator allows users to enter the characteristics of an existing survey and determine the confidence level for the results. Site also discusses statistical significance and survey design.


SAMPLE STUDIES

Researching who has linked to a particular page over time. Content analysis (in terms of document type, creator, and language) of pages linking to the cybermetrics home page.

600 surveys mailed to international student offices and university libraries at 300 universities in Arkansas, Arizona, California, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas to assess the major challenges international students face in adjusting to a new culture, a new educational/library system, and another language. Looking for correlations. Appendices 2 and 3 reproduce survey instruments.

Survey of institutions working with the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition which had done its own studies in 1997 and 2000, to determine whether FYE course curricula contained a library component.

Discusses the use of multiple instruments (pre- and post-tests, attitude and usage surveys, and focus groups) in assessing the effectiveness of library programs and services. Figures reproduce instruments.

Examining 500 citations to internet resources from articles published in LIS journals between 1999 and 2000 to track stability of scholarly web sources.

Discusses various research methods, including circulation and usage statistics, publication patterns, and survey data.

Usability testing of library web site with 20 faculty, 10 graduate students, and 30 undergrads following a think-aloud protocol. Usability test comprised of 20 common representative tasks developed by a committee of 6 librarians and pre-tested with students and staff. Survey questions included.

Comparison of three instructional methods to determine differences in knowledge acquisition related to three types of knowledge associated with using a search engine – instruction by example, conceptual models without illustrations, and conceptual models with illustrations. Sample of 173 students total, divided into three groups.

Discusses usability testing (questionnaires and think-alouds) as a teaching method. Panel of reference librarians prepared list of questions for testing. Sample includes 158 students, who completed the questionnaire, as well as 10 who were observed.


Experimental comparison of the difference in effectiveness between a real-time hands-on lecture/demonstration with a high active learning component and an eclectic format combining traditional passive lecture format with an active hands-on component. Pre- and post-instruction surveys/tests to measure student learning. Instrument published in article.


Describes the use of multiple assessment measures, including cumulated responses to students’ one-minute papers, pre- and post-tests, rubrics, and standard class evaluation forms. Includes sample instruments.


Uses pre- and post-testing of 234 cadets who entered the Coast Guard Academy in 1993 and 259 who entered in 1994 to measure success of instruction.


Survey of instruction librarians to measure how much they know of and use learning style theory. 33 question instrument, pre-tested on 11 people. Survey sent via mail to 1,500 members of LIRT and IS in April 2000; 60.5% response rate.


48 first-year Business & Commerce students at two Western Australian universities exposed to databases and then asked to search for resources “on a complex four-concept task.” Pre-testing of participants to measure prior experience with database searching. Search histories of participants stored on computer, with each line of search later analyzed to identify search effort, redundant activities, and strategy quality.


Examined frequency, format and activity of internet references from three high-impact science journals and found that, of those articles containing internet references, an average of 13% of internet references were found to be inactive at 27 months after publication.

Examing 20 web-based library tutorials previously selected by the Research Committee of ALA’s Library Instruction Round Table (LIRT) as examples of online library instruction to see to what degree they conformed to seven characteristics of effective LI. Characteristics of effective LI drawn from various sources cited in the text.

Looking at newspapers’ web sites in terms of 3 sets of guidelines created by Nielsen, Spool, and CNET. Newspapers identified from Editor and Publisher.

Describes a multi-year assessment plan implemented by the CSU system in order to establish a baseline of IC skills in the CSU; to gather reliable data as support for programs of IC; to provide data to create targeted IC instructional experiences; and to provide support for the next phase system-wide strategic plan. Phase I involved a quantitative survey of 3,309 CSU students using six information scenarios. Phase II involved 67 students, 20 librarians, and 10 faculty in problem-solving tasks; computer activities recorded using screen captures and ethnographic field note data collected from observation of 16 students. [See also CSU Information Competence Assessment Project. http://www.csupomona.edu/~kkdunn/ictaskforcearchive/ictaskforce.html.]

Evaluating effectiveness of a new LI program by comparing first-year student research papers written before and after the program was implemented. Sample portfolios evaluated in comparison to an analytic rubric covering “the presence of an arguable thesis, the use of source texts to support that thesis, the overall development of the argument, the development and coherence of paragraphs and sentences, and the control of conventional usage and mechanics.” 30 portfolios randomly selected from the “before” and “after” pools and rated by 3 senior teaching assistants in the Freshman Writing Program. Raters blinded as to whether portfolio was pre- or post-change. Scoring rubric included in Figure 2. Bibliographies specifically examined.

Survey of 48 undergraduate students regarding their perceptions of academic librarians. Compared results to Hernon and Pastine’s study of 362 students by questionnaire and 20 students by interview – although did not use same instrument. Survey instrument published in article. 48 questions: 30 selected-response and 6 constructed-response, as well as 3 checklists. Survey given to students in a library class.

Assessment of student learning using a 29-question test.

Administering the Illinois Association of College and Research Libraries Library Skills Test as a pre- and post-test measure. Testing 543 students, only 275 of which completed both tests.

Interviewing 14 undergraduates who had successfully completed research processes to discover how their search processes compare to the search strategies frequently taught in LI sessions. Students described how they found a focus for their research, how they found and used evidence, and how they articulated their work in writing. Asking faculty to identify the students. Acknowledging weakness of students’ self-reporting in hindsight. “Librarian” models described in reference to the literature.

Experimental comparison of “traditional” and “enhanced” LI for students using multiple measures—analysis of 2,129 citations from 269 student bibliographies, an information literacy questionnaire, and aggregate data from an in-class writing exercise.

Looking at student difficulties in citing sources by interviewing faculty, surveying 20 students, and examining several style manuals.

Combination survey/test instrument given to 100 students who had participated in an LI program three years earlier, and the long-term effects of the program were compared to those realized three weeks after the program. Article reproduces the instruments used. [See also Kaplowitz. 1986. A pre- and post-test evaluation of the English 3-library instruction program at UCLA. *Research Strategies*, 4, 11-17].

Surveying ½ of senior class asking them to identify people, including themselves, from whom they had learned various research skills and tools, as well as to evaluate their comfort levels. Students also identified courses in which they received library instruction and rated the usefulness of LI sessions. 3 open-ended questions on problems students faced in researching. 216 students completed surveys; 65% response rate. Survey instrument in Appendix A.

Comparison of the effectiveness of in-person and Web-based instruction for first-year students. Using pre- and post-tests.

Use of survey instrument with a test component against which students’ self-assessed skills could be compared. Students’ responses compared for differences across academic levels—from first-years through graduate students. Faculty also surveyed simultaneously.

Examining selected nursing course syllabi for research requirements and the resulting student research bibliographies as an outcome assessment. 441 bibliographic citations from 78 student papers in 1998-1999. Also looking for differences between on- and off-campus students. Discusses syllabi analysis, library use/instruction statistics analysis, rating of references or bibliographies, and portfolio analysis as good methods for outcomes assessment.
Looking at affect of prescriptive, faculty-directed library research instruction on student term paper quality.
Examination of student research logs. Trying to factor out influences of student writing skill in analysis of term paper.

Comparing effectiveness of online library tutorial and more traditional classroom instruction in promoting student learning for first-year students in English composition. Pre- and post-testing, as well as measurement of attitudinal factors.

Evaluation of a library’s online tutorial using student questionnaires comprised of 5 open-ended questions.
Questionnaire items included in the text.

Survey of institutions to find out how they structured instruction programs—as part of reference department or separately. Focusing only on institutions of a certain size. Target population of 107; 71% response rate. Email survey.

National survey of libraries in Canada to track trends in teaching objectives, methods, and content. Comparison of data to that from a 1995 study and similar studies in U.S. and New Zealand.

3 year study to identify instructional outcomes and characterize successful instruction from the perspective of the institutions providing the instruction and the students receiving the instruction. Included interviews (34 total) with instructional librarians and senior library administrators at 3 Canadian institutions.

Experiment comparing effectiveness of two presentation media for LI, lecture and computer-assisted instruction. Effectiveness measured by pre- and post-testing of student attitudes, as well as a follow-up study seeking qualitative, affective data. Table 1 reproduces the 18-question survey instrument.

Looking at citations of articles published by faculty over a 12 year period. Comparing core list from these findings with published ones for the field.


Study to determine whether cooperative (or small group) methods are more effective than traditional methods for LI for 1st year English. Use of pre-test to assess basic library skills. 15-item questionnaire: 1-8 looked at proficiencies in specific library skills, 9-12 looked at comfort level, and 13-15 gathered demographic information. Administered survey to 245 students in the 2nd course of the 1st year English sequence.


Examination of the nature and value of undergraduate students’ experiences with the academic library by looking at data from 300,000 students on the College Student Experiences Questionnaire between 1984 and 2000. [See also Kuh & Gonyea. 2003. The role of the academic library in promoting student engagement in learning. In Thompson, 2003, 9-31]


Sample draw from 3 sections of a required business class. Student participation voluntary, and students who chose to participate were given extra credit. Questionnaire on knowledge of, attitudes about, and experiences using print library sources, electronic library sources, and web resources. Sample of 90 students.


Interviewing 25 high school students to study their use of the Web in completing assignments. Clarifying questions used.


Target population of Indochinese students at San Jose State and the University of California, Berkeley. Email and in-person surveys using same questions. Surveys yielded 50 responses; a 14% response rate. Also interviewing 248 students, 97% of the 256 students approached.


Same survey of student Internet use repeated at least 3 times, in different years.


Survey distributed in student union. 370 surveys returned, 139 by non-users. Survey options included agree, disagree, neutral, and don’t know in relation to series of statements, such as “When I walk into a library I feel …” Finding that users appear to have a more positive attitude toward the library than do non-users. Instrument published in chapter.

Correlates five survey questions from the NSSE with the ACRL Information Literacy Standards and Bloom’s taxonomy as a way to measure how an institution’s curriculum incorporates information literacy experiences.

Research based on use of the Information Literacy Survey with graduating seniors in 1994, 1995, and 1999. Survey asks students to rate their library knowledge on a four-point scale, as well as answer questions designed to test their skill levels. Self-reports compared to actual skill levels.

Use of student and faculty questionnaires to measure perceptions of a web-based tutorial. Questionnaires based on examples from Shonrock, 1996, *Evaluating library instruction: Sample questions, forms, and strategies for practical use*. 141 student surveys and 4 faculty surveys returned.

Instrument included 20 questions in 5 thematic areas based on ACRL standards. Target population 40,000 students at 15 French- and English-language institutions of higher education in Quebec. 5,281 questionnaires sent out, response rate of 56.9%.

Seeking to evaluate impact of a credit course of student learning outcomes. Matching students who took elective class with a randomly selected control group similar in enrollment status, prior GPA, primary language, and units attempted. Looking at completion rate, GPA, units completed. Also looking at rate of plagiarism after library instruction in course-related sessions, as well as correlations between participation in library workshops and student performance on course outcomes.

Study of student comprehension of library jargon. Terms viewed as jargon taken from actual reference interviews and library handouts. Multiple choice test given to first-year students, with “thinking-aloud” or protocol analyses also run to collect information about the students’ reasoning processes. Using graduate students in English/technical writing to identify jargon by looking at first 2 pages of a number of handouts. Each handout given to 2 students. Also taped reference interviews of 4 librarians to identify terms. Using ALAL Glossary of Library and Information Science for definitions of terms. Incorrect definitions based on answers supplied by a small sample of first-years given terms and asked to define them. Subjects = 100 first-year English students. 4 students did think alouds.

Pre- and post-testing to compare the effectiveness of student learning from an online tutorial and traditional instruction. Subjects were students in a first-year English class. Also surveying attitudes. N=64.
Survey in 2000 to gather data about tour administration, audience, and structure, as well as librarians’ views on tours. Comparison of data to that from 3 LOEX surveys in 1979, 1987, and 1995 [these surveys used the same instrument]. Looked at libraries’ web sites and sent email to 100 librarians; 61% response rate.

Investigation of relationship between academic procrastination and library anxiety at the graduate level. Subjects = 135 students enrolled in 3 sections of a required introductory-level educational research courses. Instruments = the Library Anxiety Scale (developed by Sharon Bostick) and the Procrastination Assessment Scale—Students (developed by Solomon and Rothblum).

Survey of incoming first-year students at Purdue in 1999 and 2000 to measure computer and information skills. Factor analysis used to determine whether or not computer and information skills are separate entities. 23-question instrument reproduced as an appendix to the article.

Experiment to determine comparability of paper-and-pencil and Web-based survey instruments measuring patrons’ satisfaction with libraries’ resources and services. 458 out of 4,554 Web page users completed the survey, for a 10% response rate. Every 10th user leaving the library offered the paper-and-pencil survey. 366 responses were obtained from 4,831 possible respondents, for a 7.58% response rate. Web survey reproduced in Figure 1. Finding of small, but significant, differences in means for populations with similar demographics using different survey media.

Bibliometric study, treating links on the Web as equivalent to citations in texts.

Examination of discarded student cheat sheets. Coding to track discipline, type of information on the sheet, how sheet formatted and constructed, how sheet concealed and used, and where sheet disposed of.

Syllabus study. Also got first-day instructions for students from class instructors. Trying to measure how many courses have library use built-in, and which disciplines and levels.

Study looking at level of use of electronic resources, how students feel about various issues surrounding use of electronic resources, and whether attitudes were dependant on the subject students studied. 317 students completed questionnaires.
government home pages from 1997 to 2002. *International Journal of Human-Computer
Studies*, 59 (4), 397-522.
Tracking changes in home pages of state governments over time using the Internet Archive. Got images of pages,
then had 180 participants sort pages into groups; then created dissimilarity and individual agreement matrixes for
groupings. Subjects paid and came in response to ads.

undergraduate students evaluate web sources. *Reference Services Review*, 26 (3-4),
53-60.
Subjects were 49 students from a composition course enrolling 1st and 2nd year students. Teaching assistants for 3
sections volunteered their students to participate. Students divided into 2 groups. Both groups given same sample
research topic and 25 minutes to review each site, also told could go anywhere on the internet for more information.
Group 1 asked to evaluate in terms of criteria in the form of specific questions they had to answer from an evaluation
checklist. Group 2 asked to discuss in essays how they would evaluate the quality of each site, including specific
criteria used to assess quality. Wanted to compare evaluation methods used by students to “approved standards”
derived by looking at 7 typical lists of criteria and seeking commonalities between them. 4 librarians evaluated each
site using same criteria as students in group 1.

*Reference Services Review*, 30 (2), 112-123.
Interviews with first-year students to better understand the kinds of information they needed and how they acquired it.
Email also used in questioning students. Questions based on the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for
Higher Education*. Initial sample was 14 students and 1 faculty member, but 5 students dropped out over time, leaving
9 students and 1 faculty member. “Study was a hybrid that included components normally found in qualitative,
descriptive, and case study research. The study also included a quantitative component in that an open-ended survey
was used as an entry point for data collection.” Also using peer debriefing and logs of interactions with subjects.

Seiden, Peggy, Kris Szymborski, & Barbara Norelli. 1997. *Undergraduate students in the
digital library: Information seeking behavior in an heterogeneous environment.*
Study of 60 students to assess students’ information seeking behavior in general, get information about the search
process, and to discern how students acquired their knowledge of online searching. Used both individual and group
interviews. Approaching students in the reference area over 2 semesters and asking them if they would be
interviewed. Interviews took 20-30 minutes. Also questionnaire and group interviews

LOEX’s survey of LI practices. Earlier surveys in 1980 and 1989, compared to data from 1995. Surveying all
institutions in the LOEX database.

Smith, Kerry J. 2002. Professor attendance as a factor in perceived library instruction
Survey of instruction librarians regarding the impact of professor attendance on the effectiveness of library
instruction. Brief survey emailed to all subscribers of BI-L and LIBREF-L.

Survey developed by ACRL and emailed to VPs of academic units at approximately 2700 institutions in May 2001 to
gauge trends in IL. 62% response rate.

Staines, Gail M. 1996. Moving beyond institutional boundaries: Perceptions toward BI for
2-phrase study involving a survey and interviews to understand better the different perceptions of community college
and four-year institution library staff toward LI for transfer students.

Still, Julie. 1998. The role and image of the library and librarians in discipline-specific
Examining the presentation of library research, library assignments, libraries, and librarians in articles authored by
faculty and published in discipline-specific pedagogical journals. Study involved a search of 29 specific journals in
the ERIC database as well as page-by-page review of 13 journals.

Tancheva, Kornelia. 2003. Online tutorials for library instruction: An ongoing project under
Examination of 47 library online tutorials in light of recommendations for best practices. Recommendations derived
from various sources.

Thelwall, Mike. 2002. The top 100 linked-to pages on UK university web sites: High inlink
counts are not usually associated with quality scholarly content. *Journal of Information
Science*, 28 (6), 483-491.
Looking at link counts to pages.

National Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, April 10-13,

Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, March 15-18, 2001,

Conference of the Association of College and Research Libraries, April 8-11, 1999,

students: Results and implications for bibliographic instruction. *Internet Reference
Survey of first-year English students about their use of the Web. Survey tested on a group of 12 students. All students
taking English 102 completed survey in Spring 1999. Reprinting questions in article.

Valentine, Barbara. Students versus the research paper: What can we learn? In Thompson
Interviewing 28 undergraduates either in focus groups or individually about how they accomplished the task of
completing a substantial research paper during the course of a class in 1993. Study repeated with 31 students in 1998.
Attitudinal survey administered pre- and post-instruction to first-year students as part of measuring degree to which computer-based instruction and traditional library instruction reduced library anxiety among first-year students. Used control group. Instrument used was Bostick’s Library Anxiety Scale (based on Mellon’s qualitative study).

Analysis of student responses to short film, The Shooting Gallery. Tracking comments in writing and discussions. 20 students total. Examining set of phrases or terms used by viewers to describe the work and make meaning from it and then making frequency counts (17 of 20, etc.). Comparing findings to parallel experiment among graduate classes at Columbia University’s School of Library Service involving 63 respondents.

Use of four “user panels” consisting of 4-8 students that met twice during a semester to describe their experience with a first year seminar, library use, library instruction, email instruction and use. All students volunteers. Also use of brief survey. Subjects given cash incentives. Interviews taped and transcribed.

Use of usability testing and interviews to determine the mental models that undergraduate students bring to online library tutorials. Librarians’ mental models derived from the literature and compared to students’.

Experiment to determine if a pre-session prior to a regularly scheduled library instruction session would have any effect upon student attitudes toward the library, the libraries, the relevance of using the library, and the effectiveness of library instruction. Strong example of operationalizing research terms (pp. 82-83). Use of pre- and post-test to measure student attitudes, feelings, and beliefs. Sample = students in 6 first-year composition classes. 3 classes = experimental group and 3 classes = control group.

Use of focus groups to investigate how people experience the library and how they find and use information. Focus group participants given incentives in the form of food.

Doing secondary analysis of data obtained from the National Survey of Student Learning. Selecting 1046 of 3840 responses. Looking at answers to questions in terms of race, age, etc.

Examining data from the College Student Experiences Questionnaire, a cross-sectional survey completed by students during 1992-1993. Data set = 18,157 students. Relationship between library use and library activities and (students’ self-report of the) development of critical thinking skills.

Wilson, Rebecca A. Revelry, revelation, or research: What are college students really doing on the Internet. In Thompson 1999, 364-369.
75 students as subjects. Using small, scheduled, focus-group sessions in which students who used internet were asked a series of 11 questions about internet use and non-users were asked 4 questions about non-use. Seeking reasons for use, time spent in use. Includes questions asked of students.

Study of how university faculty perceive a library liaison program. Survey of 64 library representatives for each academic department/program.
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