



A Collaborative Assessment: An Advanced Searching Workshop Evaluation

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Land Acknowledgement

The University of Alberta stands on amiskwacîwâskahikan, a Cree word meaning "beaver hills house", in the Treaty 6 Territory city now known as Edmonton--where many indigenous nations lived for generations before European settlers came to Turtle Island, and continue to do so to this day.



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Outline

- Why conduct this assessment?
- Pre-assessment workshop format
- The assessment plan
- Assessment results
- Evidence-based decisions
- The future



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Why Conduct This Assessment?

Request came to AIT from Geoffrey & Robyn Sperber Health Sciences Library:

- Focus would be the evaluation of the instructional design of a well attended and long-standing workshop on advanced systematic search skills.
- HS librarians noted that while the workshop was well attended (over 900 registrations 2020-2023), they were delivering many research consultations which covered topics taught in the workshop.
- Asynchronous learning modules that mirrored the “live” workshop content and included supportive resources, but they were not well used and students rarely knew they existed.

Assessment Questions

The working group outlined three main goals for the project:

1. Determine how well students were learning the foundation skills required to conduct the initial steps of a systematic search as part of a larger systematic or scoping review
2. Determine the delivery preference for learners
3. Identify and address the gap between learning theory of advanced searching and the applying that learning to a systematic search

Pre-Assessment Workshop

- Four 1-hr synchronous sessions offered on consecutive days during a single week
- Offered monthly
- Pre-COVID, offered in-person in a computer lab, up to 20 attendees
- During/after COVID, offered via Zoom, up to 100 attendees
- Online asynchronous modules complement the "live" workshop

The Assessment Plan

This project was conducted between October 2022 and March 2023

The assessment strategy was survey based and comprised of three parts:

1. **Post-test style survey** was used to assess the learning of attendees who had taken the workshop in August to October 2022. Survey included "test your knowledge" style questions as well as questions about demographics and mode of delivery preferences
2. **In-class problem-based learning style quizzes** were delivered at the end of the daily workshop sessions January to March 2023. Quizzes took approximately 5 minutes for learners to complete and were promoted as a good way for learners to test their own learning during the sessions
3. **Follow up survey** was distributed to attendees who attended January to March 2023. Survey asked questions about demographics, mode of delivery preference, and "confidence" with skills taught at the workshop. Confidence questions were adapted from Fresno Tests and "researcher-readiness" assessment literature.

Assessment Results

Demographic and Format Survey Results

- 24/51 respondents answered some or all of the survey questions (47% response rate)
- 15 respondents answered demographic questions
- Most were graduate or postdoc students from the College of Health Sciences
- 53% had completed a systematic, scoping or other type of review in the past
- Most preferred synchronous virtual instruction of the mode of delivery
- Shorter sessions (1-hr) over a single week were preferred
- 50/50 split RE knowledge about the online asynchronous modules
- 8 respondents noted they preferred to receive slides and handouts before the session

Assessment Results

Confidence Check Survey Results

- Majority responded they either somewhat agreed or strongly agreed they were confident they could develop a structured search strategy using PICO and Boolean Operators
- 10 respondents said they were somewhat confident selecting the most appropriate research methodology to suit their research question, only 2 said strongly confident
- Most responded they felt somewhat or strongly confident they could complete a Medline search and translate it to other databases
- Majority said they felt somewhat or strongly confident they would be able to report their search well according to PRISMA-S

Assessment Results

Knowledge Check In-Class Results

- Overall, responses demonstrated a stronger understanding of the technical aspects of searching, such as truncation and boolean logic
- Complex or theoretical concepts covered in-class demonstrated less understanding (ie more incorrect responses to these questions)
- Inconsistency between Confidence and Knowledge Check questions: Most respondents felt confident in creating a Medline strategy, whereas only 36.1% were able to accurately identify which field the MESH heading was located in. This is an essential part of creating a search in Medline.

Evidence-Based Decisions

1. Maintain virtual synchronous one-hour workshops as the mode of delivery
2. Reduce workshop series from four days to three
3. Learning materials distributed ahead of sessions and supporting resources are made available after the workshop is completed
4. Revitalize the online asynchronous modules to be a more effective resource and teaching tool for advanced systematic search skills



The Future

- Example of a collaborative assessment project between a specific library unit and functional team
- Continuous assessment and collaboration enhance the delivery of critical skills, such as research skills, in academic libraries



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Questions?

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Check out the "Searching to Support Systematic, Scoping, and Other Types of Reviews: Search Skills Tutorial"



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