Assessment of Library Support for Distance Learning at UNT

LITA Distance Learning Interest Group
ALA Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana
June 27, 2011
Objectives

• Overview
• LibQUAL+
• Focus Groups
• Ethnographic study
• Comparison of findings
Distance Student Population

For more data, see http://clear.unt.edu/index2.cfm?M=2&SM=7

Data is from Spring, 2009.
Distance Student Locations
Online Degree Programs and Certificates

• College of Business
  – 2 MBAs

• College of Education
  – 3 master’s degrees
  – 3 graduate academic certificates

• College of Information
  – 6 master’s degrees
  – 1 bachelor’s degree
  – 3 advanced certificates
  – 2 graduate academic certificates
  – 1 school library certification

• College of Public Affairs and Community Service
  – 4 master’s degrees
  – 1 bachelor’s degree
  – 2 graduate academic academic certificates
  – 2 certificates

• School of Merchandising and Hospitality Management
  – 2 master's degrees
  – 2 graduate academic certificates
Research Approach

• Triangulation: use of multiple methods for a study
• Benefit of triangulation: Addresses the issue of biases in social science research
• Types of triangulation:
  – Data
  – Researcher
  – Theory
  – Method
Methods Used at UNT

• LibQUAL+ survey
• Focus Groups
• Ethnographic research
Where We Started

- LibQUAL+ Survey 2009 Results
- Assessed problem areas by looking at items with largest superiority gaps
- Superiority gap = the difference between what is perceived and what is desired
# Largest Online User Superiority Gaps in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>LibQUAL+ Survey Item</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own</td>
<td>-1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Availability of online help when using my library’s electronic resources</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work</td>
<td>-1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The electronic information resources I need</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
</tr>
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Next Step: Focus Groups

- Population: distance learning students – meeting their needs will improve services for everyone
Recruiting

- Blackboard Announcements
- Email Invitations
- Incentives
Volunteer Demographics

• 16 volunteers

• Academic level
  – 9 graduate students
  – 5 undergraduates
  – 1 certificate program
  – 1 undecided

• College
  – College of Business
  – College of Education
  – College of Information
  – College of Public Affairs and Community Service

• Basic demographics
  – 5 men, 11 women
  – Most over 30
  – 1 African American; 1 Asian American; 14 Caucasian
  – 1 foreign student

• Location
  – 4 on campus
  – 3 in DFW metroplex
  – 2 in other parts of Texas
  – 6 out of state
  – 1 out of country
Technology
IRB Approval

• Required to use results for

Presentation

Publication
Scheduling

Email

http://doodle.com/
Problems Encountered in Focus Groups
Data Analysis

Microsoft Office Excel

Microsoft Office Access

atlas.ti
Representative Online Student Comments

• **COB Male**: How would I like to learn--right as a distance learner I wish there were more mention of the UNT Library on the main UNT page, or my UNT page, or in ..... Blackboard so that way I don’t have to go to any course to look at that library. It should just pop out right there.

• **MLS Female**: The only thing that I find out about these things that ya’ll have on campus like training for graduate students with RefWorks and graduate research. It seems like they are always on campus, and maybe ya’ll do have it where distance students can access that or get transcripts somehow. But, I’ve never seen it, but I would like to do something like that. But I just live too far away from Denton to try to actually go to one.

• **Applied Technology Male**: Well I will say this about the UNT Library. When I was going there in 1994 and 1995, um I actually had somebody lead me around and show me pretty much everything I needed to know at the physical library. But that was probably my most memorable experience was having somebody actually there with me. So that’s why I’m saying it would be great to have somebody online with me showing me.
Follow Up Committees

Outreach Services
## Comparing Survey and Focus Group Results for Online Students

<table>
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<th>Online Student Focus Group Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own</td>
<td>Increase the Libraries’ presence and visibility in Blackboard.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own</td>
<td>Make the UNT Libraries’ website easier to search.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Availability of online help when using my library’s electronic resources</td>
<td>Obtain, publicize, and provide instruction in the use of a discovery tool.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Print and/or electronic journal collections I require for my work</td>
<td>Provide library instruction that doesn’t require being at the physical library.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The electronic information resources I need</td>
<td>Communicate and collaborate more effectively with faculty members that teach online classes.</td>
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Ethnographic Study by Anthropology Graduate Students

• Fall 2010
• Graduate level Anthropology Dept. qualitative analysis classes
• One on campus and one online
• Used a variety of methods:
  – Focus groups
  – Interviews
  – Observations
Anthropology Class Recruiting

• Students had a difficult time recruiting participants:
  – What didn’t work: Blackboard announcements
  – What was missing: Incentives
  – What worked:
    • Reserved volunteers from Blackboard announcements for online class researchers
    • Changed research population and focus to use of online services and resources by any students
    • Announcements in class by professors
    • Incentive: extra credit for participation as research subjects
Research Method: Observation

• On campus students: observed students researching at various physical locations on campus

• Distance students: used Wimba and shared the desktop so that the Anthropology student could observe the student volunteer doing research on the library website
Research Method: Interviews

• Students being interviewed didn’t always remember the details of their problem(s).

• Recommendations for the future
  – Conduct the interview during or immediately following the observation
  – Increase number of observations
### Comparing Results of Different Methods for Online Students

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<th>Summer 2009 Online Student Focus Group Recommendations</th>
<th>Fall 2010 Anthropology Class Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A library Web site enabling me to locate information on my own</td>
<td>Increase the Libraries’ presence and visibility in Blackboard</td>
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Comparing Results of Different Methods for Online Students

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<td>Improve user experience with the UNT Libraries website (includes problems with access tools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Online course support (readings, links, references)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Easy-to-use access tools that allow me to find things on my own</td>
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Contact Information

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940-891-6897

Link to anthropology class reports and slides:
http://digital.library.unt.edu/search/?q1=lisa+henry&q3=&q2=&q5=&q4=&searchType=advanced&q6=&o6=NOTANY&o5=NOTANY&o4=NOTANY&o3=EXACT&o2=EXACT&o1=EXACT&t6=fulltext&t4=fulltext&t5=fulltext&t2=fulltext&t3=fulltext&t1=fulltext&q=&t=fulltext&fq=str_degree_department%3AAAnthropology