May 2014

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Is their Foundation Solid Enough to Build On: An Investigation into the Information-Seeking Skills and Self-Efficacy Levels of New Nursing Students

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BUILDING Our INFORMATION FUTURE MLA'14 May 16–21 Chicago

Background

- Nurses must be able to effectively identify, analyze, and synthesize evidence. (AACN, 2008; ACRL, 2000)
- Literature regarding confidence levels, self-efficacy, and information literacy skills was reviewed. (Freeman, 2004; Gross & Latham, 2012; Swenson-Britt & Reineck, 2009)
- Tools to assess confidence and self-efficacy of information literacy skills were explored. (Kurbanoglu, 2003; Stokes & Urquhart, 2011; Geffert & Christensen, 1998)
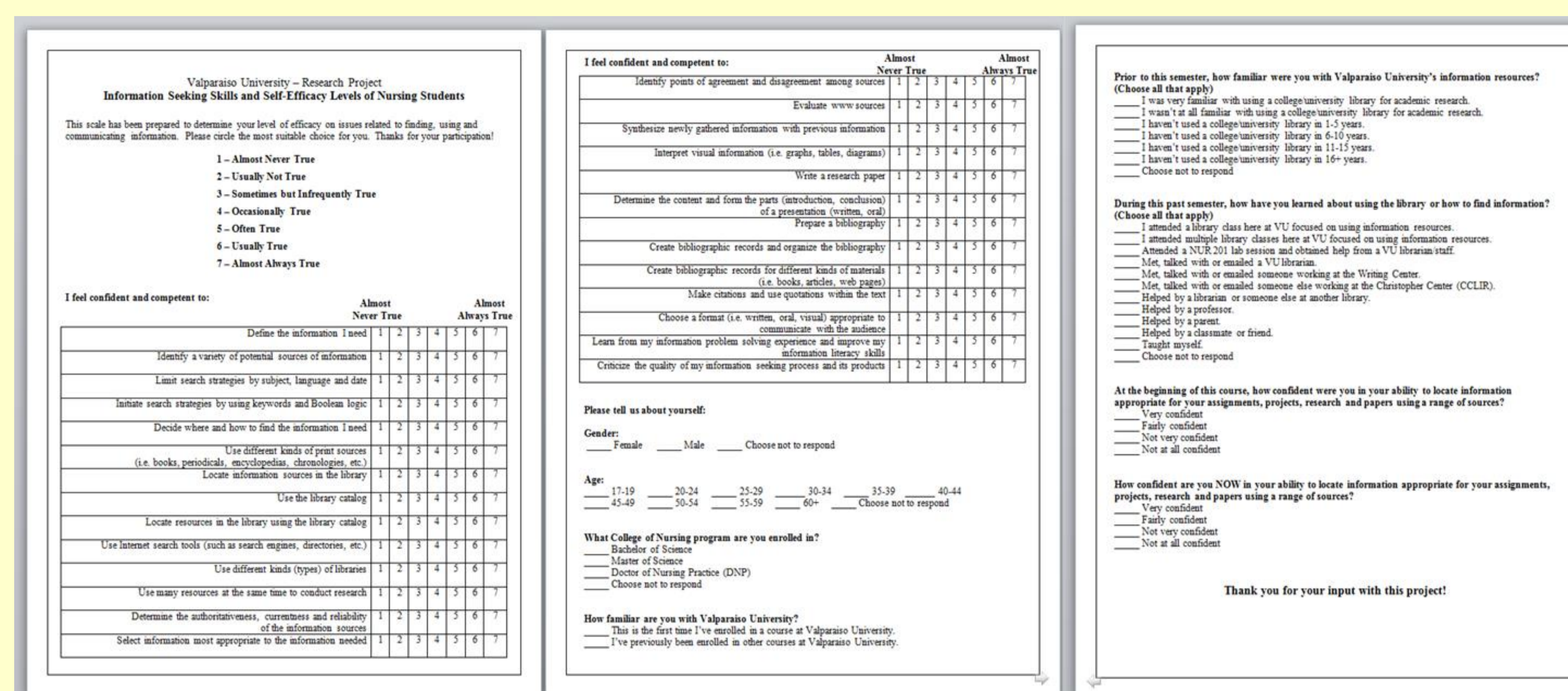
Objective

To compare the information-seeking skills and self-efficacy levels of newly enrolled nursing students at the start of their first semester of coursework to their information-seeking skills and self-efficacy levels at the end of their first semester of coursework.

Methods

- Setting was a mid-sized, faith-based university located in the Midwest.
- Data was gathered from newly enrolled nursing students in a baccalaureate, masters, and doctorate in nursing practice program.
- The 28-item Information Literacy Self-Efficacy Scale (ILSES) developed in 2006 by Serap Kurbanoglu was administered to newly enrolled nursing students at the start and at the end of the fall 2012, summer 2013, and fall 2013 semesters.

Respondent Demographics
Eligible Participants – 285 Newly Enrolled Nursing Students

	Start of Semester Sample	End of Semester Sample
Number of Respondents from Eligible Participants	227 (80%)	108 (38%)
Sex		
Female	195 (86%)	86 (80%)
Male	29 (13%)	15 (14%)
Chose Not to Respond	3 (1%)	7 (6%)
Age		
17-19 Years	80 (35%)	25 (23%)
20-24 Years	68 (30%)	39 (36%)
25-29 Years	25 (11%)	18 (17%)
30-34 Years	12 (5%)	7 (6%)
35-39 Years	11 (5%)	6 (6%)
40-44 Years	13 (6%)	6 (6%)
45-49 Years	13 (6%)	2 (3%)
50-54 Years	0	1 (1%)
55-59 Years	3 (1%)	1 (1%)
60+ Years	0	0
Chose Not to Respond	3 (1%)	2 (2%)

Results – Self-Reported Confidence Levels

Self-Reported Confidence Levels

Start of the Semester Mean: 2.86
End of the Semester Mean: 3.31
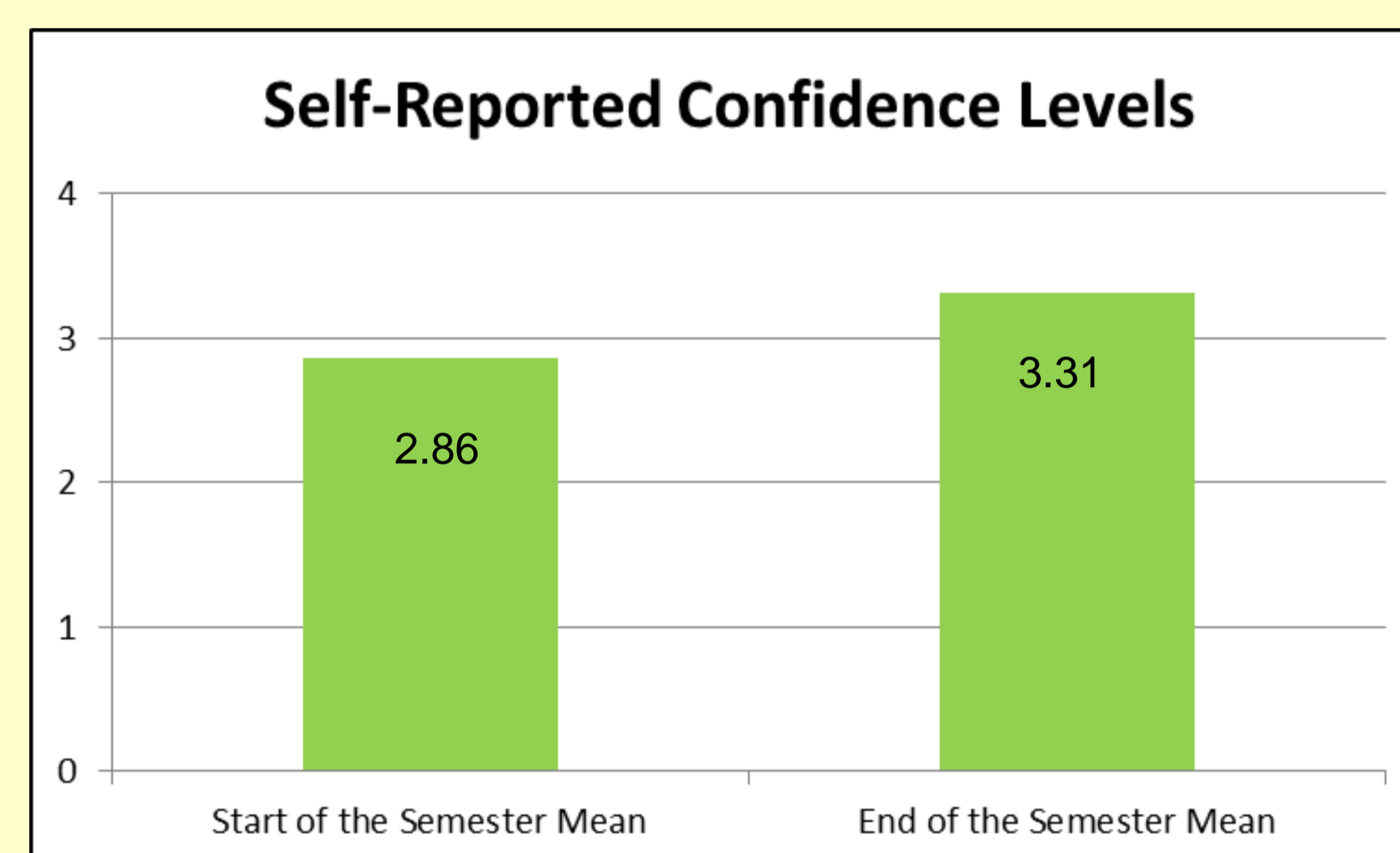
- The self-reported confidence level mean at the start of the first semester (n=227) was 2.86 and 3.31 at the end of the semester (n=108).
- An independent-samples t test comparing the mean confidence level from the start of the semester participants to the end of the semester participants found a significant difference between the mean of the two groups ($t(333) = 6.474$, $p<.05$). The mean of the end of the semester group was significantly higher ($m=3.31$, $sd=.63611$) than the mean of the start of the semester group ($m=2.86$, $sd=.58555$).

Results – Self-Reported Information Skills Interventions Utilized

- Students reported using a variety of interventions to learn how to find information or use the library in their first semester of coursework.
- The intervention most reported was attendance at a library led lab session/class – 62% of all students attended a lab session and 43% attended a class. The second most reported intervention was the students themselves – 34% of all students reported teaching themselves.
- A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict participants' self-reported confidence levels based on their use of 11 interventions. A significant regression equation was found ($F(12,95) = 1.947$, $p < .038$), with an R^2 of .197.
- Being helped by a classmate or friend was a significant predictor of confidence levels, $p < .010$. No other intervention was a significant predictor of end of the semester confidence.

Interventions Utilized During First Semester (n=108)

	Number	%
Attended an undergraduate nursing library/lab session at VU	67	62%
Attended a library class at VU	46	43%
Taught myself	37	34%
Helped by a classmate or friend	30	28%
Helped by a professor	23	21%
Met, talked with or emailed the Writing Center	23	21%
Helped by a librarian or someone else at another library	20	19%
Met, talked with or emailed the VU librarian	17	16%
Met, talked with or emailed someone working at the VU library	12	11%
Attended multiple library classes at VU	10	9%
Chose Not to Respond	4	4%
Helped by parent	1	1%

Note: Percentage does not add to 100 because of multiple answer possibilities by each respondent.

Conclusions

- Nursing students in their first semester of coursework are fairly confident in their ability to locate information appropriate for assignments, projects, research, and papers.
- Utilizing a combination of information literacy skills interventions throughout the first semester of coursework resulted in a significant increase in students' confidence in learning how to find information or use the library by the end of the semester.
- Peer teaching and learning can make a significant difference in students' confidence in learning how to find information or use the library.
- Additional research is needed to correlate confidence in information-seeking skills to the actual information literacy skills of newly enrolled nursing students within their first semester of coursework.

Recommendations

- Think-pair-share and other active peer-to-peer learning strategies should be incorporated within library led lab sessions/classes.
- To better correlate students' actual skill level with confidence level, self-efficacy and confidence assessment tools should be paired with actual skills assessment tools.
- Students are fairly confident in learning how to find information or use the library at the start of their first semester. Heightening awareness of their actual skill limitations might lead to increased participation in information skills interventions.

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