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Making Connections Between General Education Information Literacy Classes and Upper-Level Writing Courses: An Exploration of Faculty and Student Perceptions

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Recommended Citation

Rush, Lucinda; Wittkower, D.E.; and Sparkman-Key, Narketta, "Making Connections Between General Education Information Literacy Classes and Upper-Level Writing Courses: An Exploration of Faculty and Student Perceptions" (2020). *Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy*. 7.
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Making Connections Between General Education Information Literacy Classes and Upper-Level Writing Courses: An Exploration of Faculty and Student Perceptions

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Information Literacy and Writing at ODU

Information Literacy

- Required general education 3-credit course, offered by multiple colleges
- Taught by a variety of faculty, not all experts in information literacy
- Can be taken at any point

Writing

- English Composition, 100 and 200
- Writing-intensive courses taught within the major
 - Taught by faculty within the major
 - Taken during the junior or senior year
 - Has been the University QEP for the past five years



Learning Outcomes: Upper Level Writing

- Clearly state a focused problem, question and/or topic appropriate for the purpose of the task
- Identify relevant knowledge and/or credible sources
- Synthesize information and/or multiple viewpoints related to the problem, question, or topic
- Apply appropriate research methods, theoretical framework and/or genre to the problem, question, or topic
- Formulate conclusions that are logically tied to inquiry findings and consider applications, limitations, and implications



Learning Outcomes: Information Literacy

- Articulate and contextualize information needs, considering possible gaps in personal or existing knowledge and resources
- Search strategically in systems appropriate to the information needs
- Articulate that research is an ongoing, non-linear process
- Critically evaluate and identify authoritative information and information resources according to the format, context, discipline, and practice
- Synthesize information in order to enhance understanding and inform the creation of new works, or critique arguments
- Demonstrate an understanding of ethical and legal practices to employ when using, creating, and sharing information in changing technological environments



Mapping Learning Outcomes

Similarities	Differences (Writing)	Differences (Information Literacy)
Information needs/developing a research question or topic	Upper-level, 300 & 400	Lower-level (100 & 200)
Find and evaluate sources	Discipline specific writing and citation	Information ethics
Synthesize information	Discipline specific research methods and theoretical frameworks	Focus on research process, not research methods



Our Action Project

Faculty

Focus group discussions

Assignment Redesign Workshop (Charrette)

Students

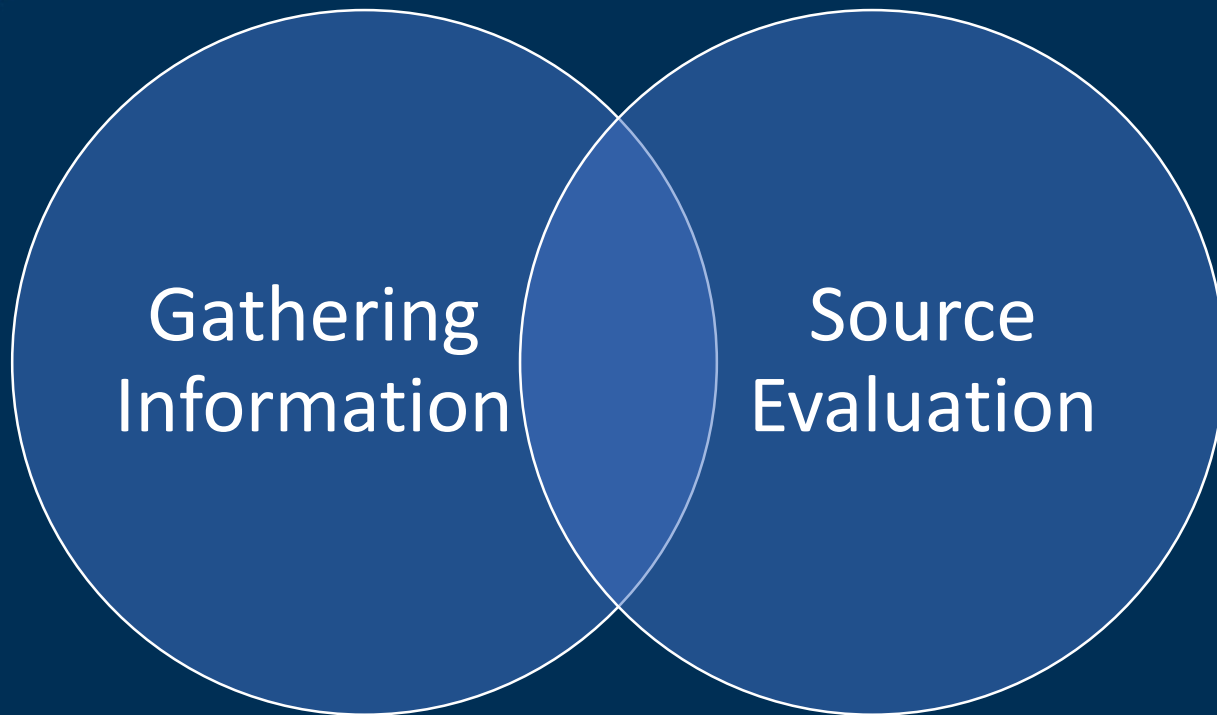
Perception Survey



Faculty Focus Group



How do you define information literacy and what does an information literacy general education course at ODU teach students, to the best of your knowledge?

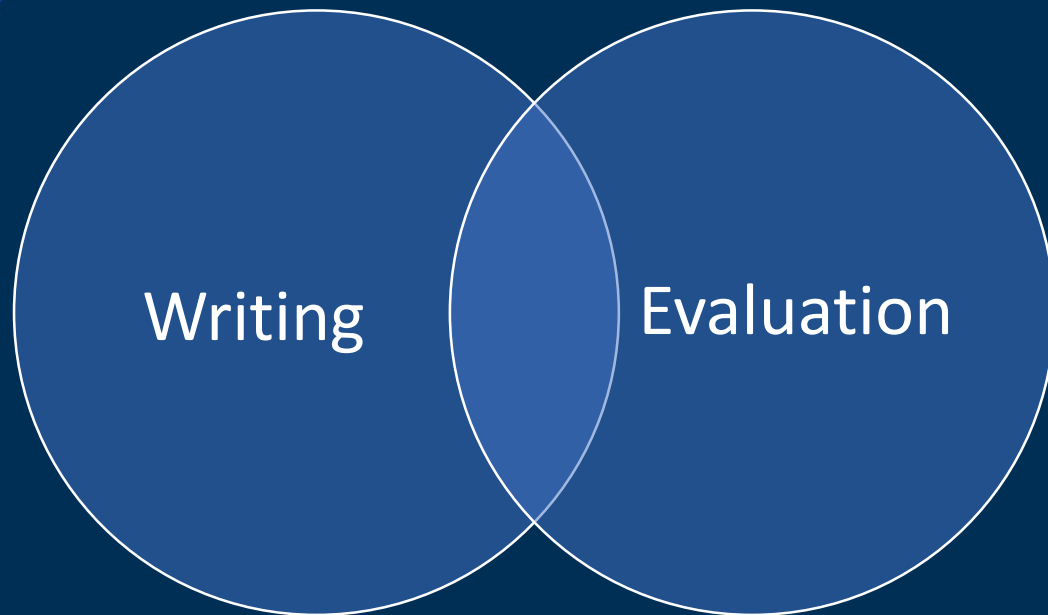


"I tell my students, it's okay to read fake news, but you have to know it's fake and be able to evaluate that."

"I think the info lit course teaches students that it is not just finding information but how to produce and share it."



What does a writing-intensive (W) course at ODU teach students, and what elements of information literacy does it draw upon?



- Focus on disciplinary writing
- Expect students to already know grammar rules

- W courses draw upon Information Literacy Courses' instruction on source evaluation



What bridges **should exist** between Writing and Information Literacy courses?

- Base knowledge of assignments and learning outcomes of each type of course
- Information Literacy Course should be a prerequisite to the Writing Intensive Course

Suggestion for Action

- Communication with advisors



Assignment Charrette



Assignment Redesign Workshop

Common Changes Made

Improve scaffolding

Adjust or add rubrics

Adjust directions

Add a peer-review element



What did you learn about Information Literacy and Writing Courses that you did not know?

- Content taught
- Existence of the information literacy course
- Information Literacy courses support Writing-Intensive courses
- Overlap between goals and assignment types
- Need to teach more information ethics

“I personally think this workshop was very well put together and I found it very useful. I was unsure what the Info Lit courses required and I found it helpful to have a better understanding of their course curriculum and expectations. This helps in planning purposes for the W course I teach.”



What were your main takeaways from the workshop?

“It was wonderful to hash out details of our assignments with each other. I haven't taught younger students much in the last few years and was struggling with my grading rubrics.”

“The Information Literacy faculty made me remember that there needs to be clear details and specific instructions for new students and reminders for 3rd and 4th year students. I decided it would be best to get them to generate these details themselves in peer editing and right before grading.”

“I was happy to see students were exposed to information literacy in this way. I wish we could coordinate advising such that students could take these courses in a progression that makes sense.”

“W instructors have allies on campus! It is incredibly heartening to see others across disciplines working to improve information literacy and by proxy critical thinking and the quality of written work. I was also impressed by some techniques others are using to emphasize concepts like why plagiarism is "bad" and evaluating a variety of sources.”



Student Perceptions

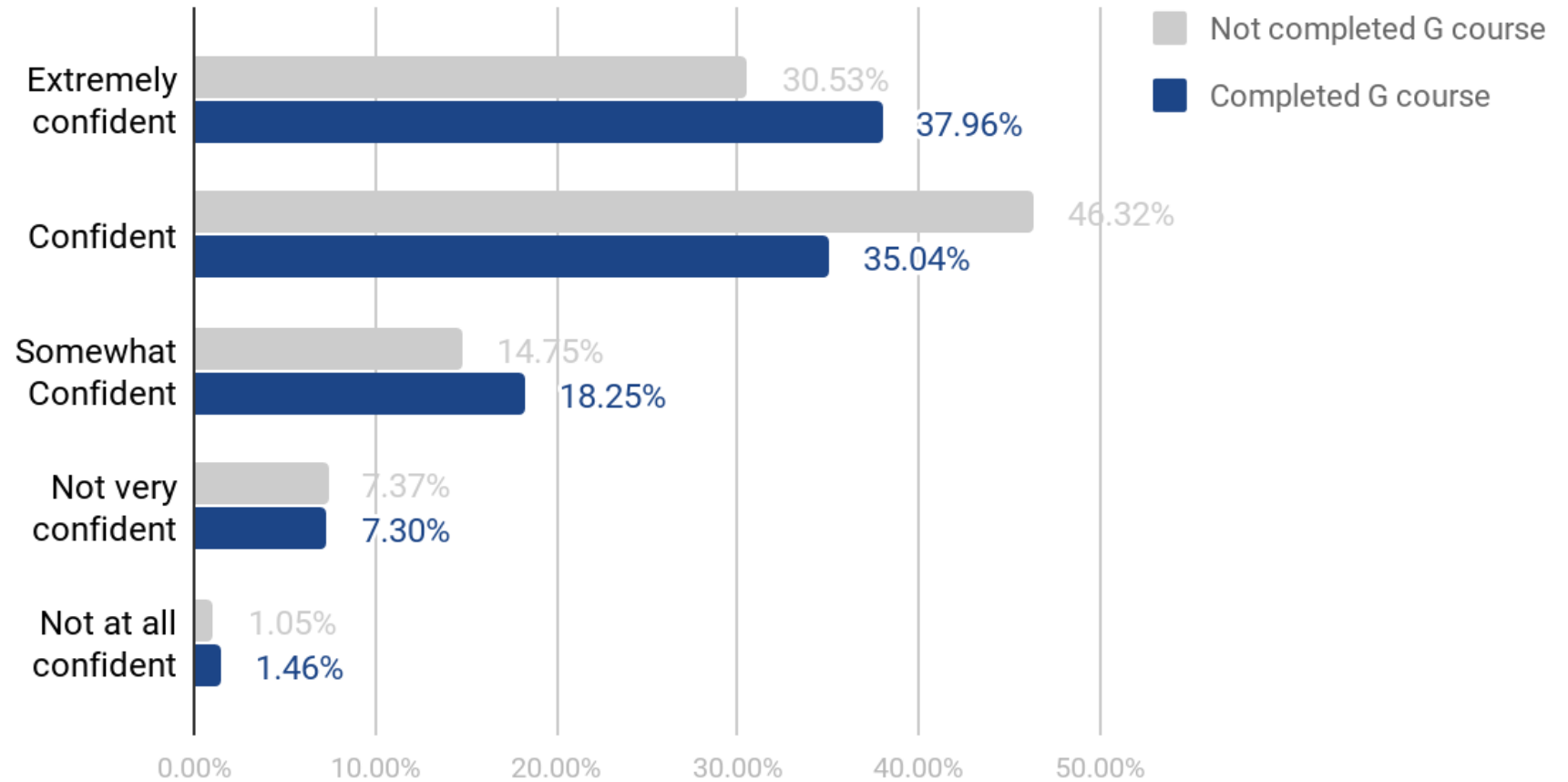


Two Surveys

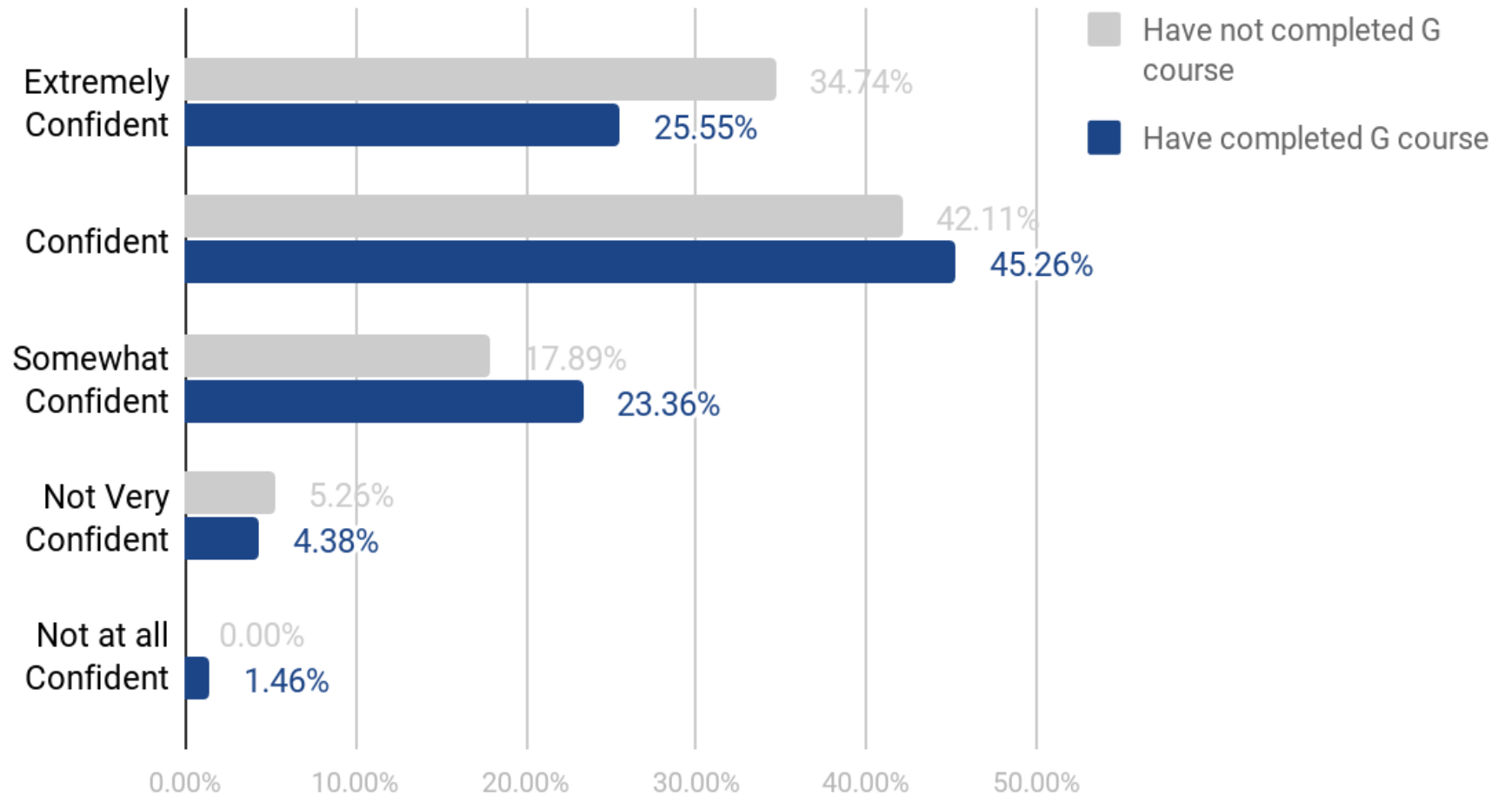
- **Survey One** to students who had already completed their Information Literacy Course and had already completed or were currently enrolled in their upper-level Writing-Intensive course
- **Survey Two** to students who were currently enrolled in or had already completed their upper-level Writing Intensive course but had not yet completed an Information Literacy course



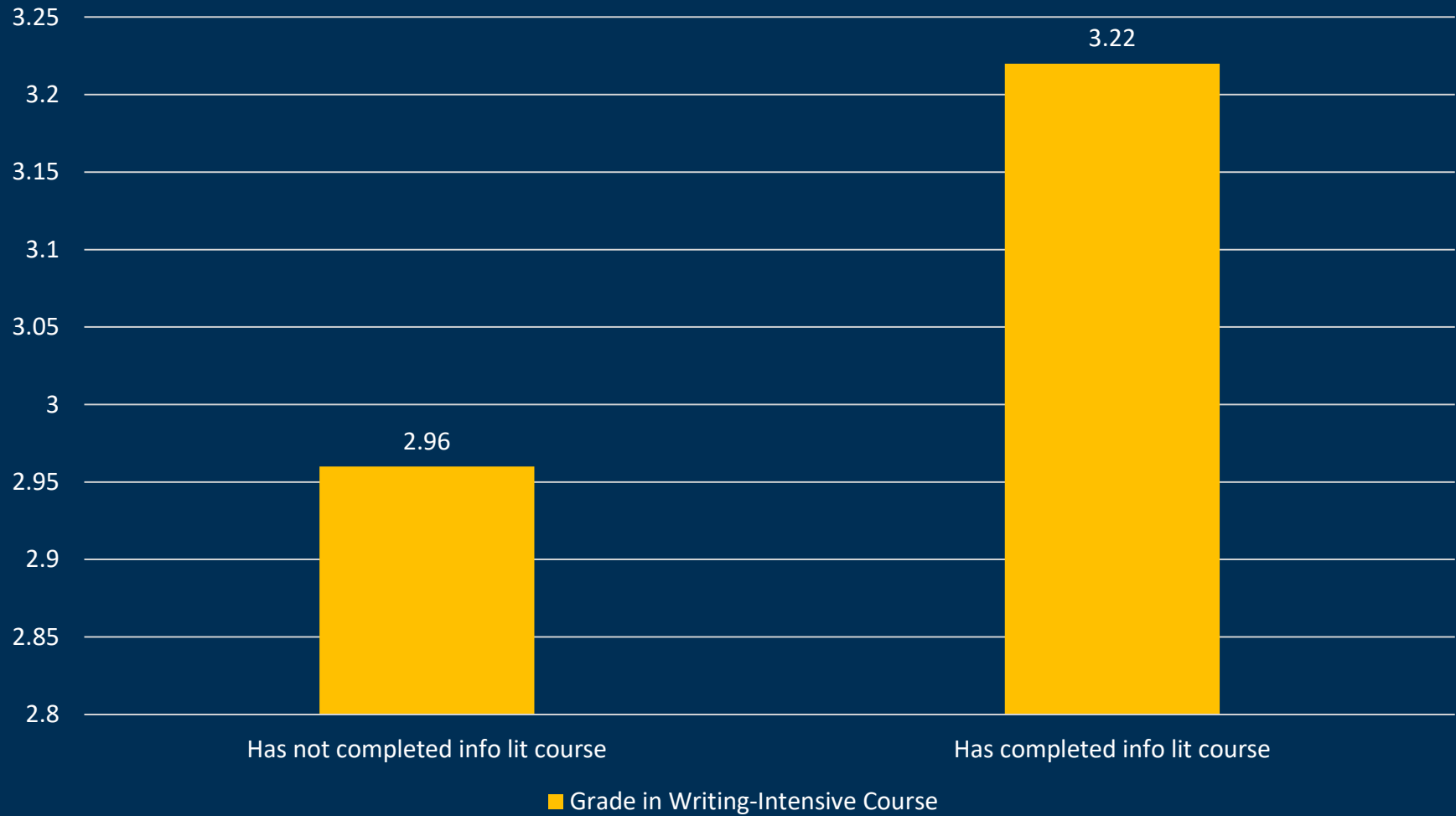
How confident are you in your ability to find sources using library databases or Google Scholar?



How confident are you in your ability to synthesize information using multiple sources and considering multiple viewpoints?



Final Grade in Writing-Intensive Course



Summary

Faculty Awareness

- Faculty for both types of courses are now more aware of the scaffolding that can and should take place between the two

Informal Networking Opportunities

- Faculty need and want opportunities to talk, share, and seek advice about these two courses

Improved Communication

- This project helped to improve communication and begin improvements to scaffolding

Scaffolding

- This project brought to light the faculty desire for information literacy to be a prerequisite for upper-level writing courses



Future Plans

Building a Community of Practice

- Regular workshops or networking opportunities for faculty who teach information literacy and writing courses
 - Suggested topics include information literacy beyond the research paper, teaching information ethics beyond plagiarism and citation

Further Research

- Further research
 - Calibration study comparing student confidence in knowledge to actual grade in courses
 - Identify information literacy courses that are successfully preparing students for writing courses and use those as examples for others



Questions?

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