

**Fairfield University's Assessment Efforts focused on  
Assessing Library Interventions to the Complex Problem of Academic Integrity**

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**Introduction**

In 2013, Fairfield University was awarded an *Assessment in Action (AiA): Academic Libraries and Student Success* grant from the Association of College and Research Libraries. Fairfield University's goals of the Assessment in Action research were to better understand our first-years students' academic integrity knowledge and skills by assessing the effect of library created learning modules on first-years' (a) understanding of academic integrity, and (b) knowledge/skills for citing sources to avoid plagiarism. The AiA team consisted of team leader/librarian Jacalyn Kremer, Head of Academic Partnerships and Assessment; Dr. Elizabeth Boquet, Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center Director; Kamala Kiem, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Engagement; and Christine Siegel, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs.

**Goals**

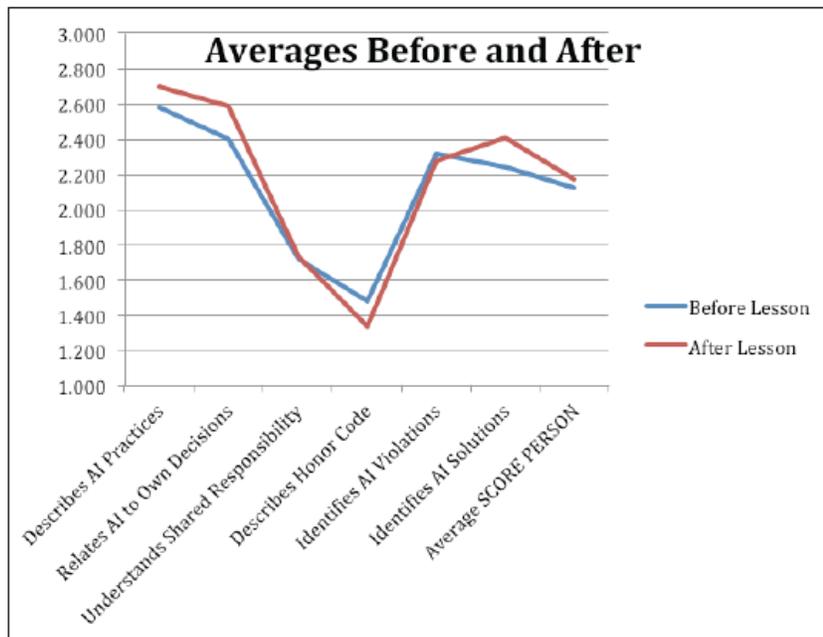
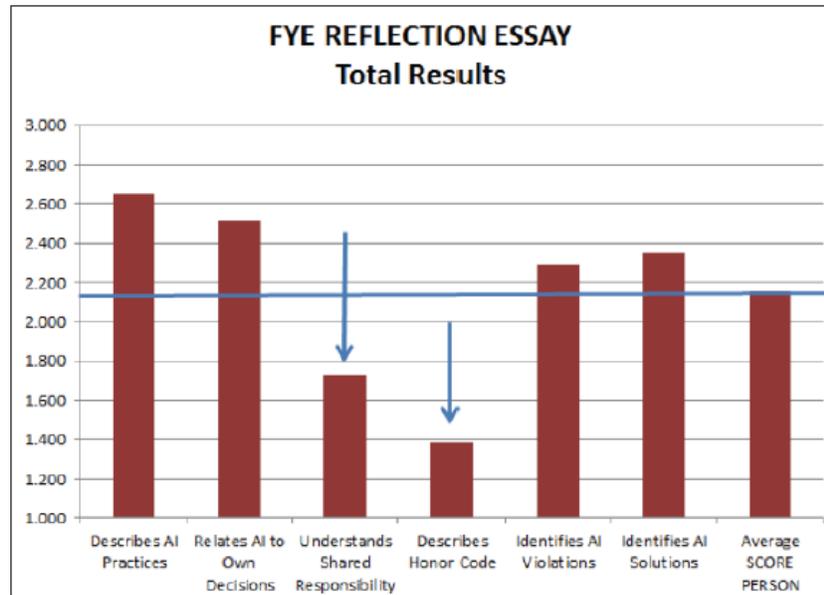
The goals of the Assessment in Action research were to determine the effect of library created learning modules on first-years' (a) understanding of academic integrity, and (b) knowledge/skills for citing sources to avoid plagiarism. The two modules embedded into the First Year Experience program are:

1. Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson, assessed by a graded essay rubric
2. Online *Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial*, assessed with a multiple choice test

**Results**

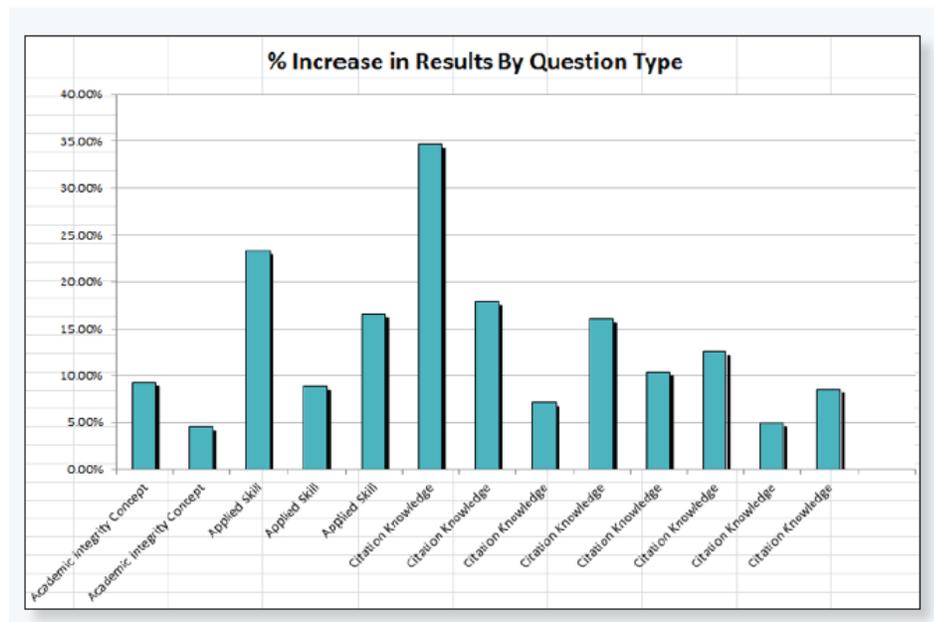
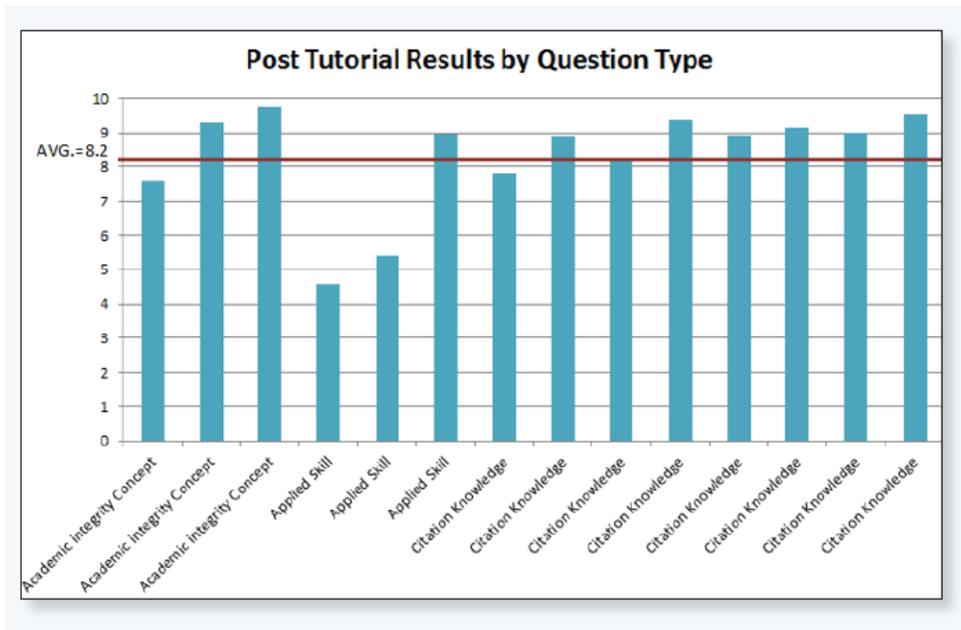
1. The Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson developed by the Library and taught in the First Year Experience program positively impacts first year students' ability to relate academic integrity practices to their own behaviors and identify solutions to their own behaviors. Although both before and after the lesson, students were weakest in their ability to identify

and explain their academic responsibilities as members of the Fairfield University community and in how they would enact the Honor Code. See charts below:



2. *Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial* results were examined by individual question, and in addition these questions were assigned to 3 different groups to aid in review: Academic Integrity Concept, Applied Skill and Citation Knowledge. In summary, students arrive with significant

knowledge about citation rules and academic integrity concepts and the Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial further increased their knowledge in these areas. Students' skills at applying citation rules, specifically their skill of paraphrasing, was their weakest area in both the Pre and Post Tests, although the Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial increased their knowledge in these areas. See charts below:



## **Recommendations and Steps Taken**

1. Although the Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson positively impacts students' ability to relate academic integrity practices to their own behaviors and identify solutions to their own behaviors, more work needs to be done to improve their understanding of academic integrity as a shared responsibility and of the Fairfield Honor Code. In response, in summer 2014, the FYE Lesson was changed to include greater emphasis on concepts of shared responsibility and expectations of the Honor Code. In addition, First-Years now participate in a communal Honor Code recitation at convocation in fall 2014. The Plagiarism Tutorial was also redesigned in summer 2016 and now emphasizes academic integrity as a shared responsibility and the Fairfield Honor Code.
  
2. The Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial results showed us first-year students come to us with solid conceptual knowledge about plagiarism, although their ability to apply that knowledge is weaker. In light of this, the Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial was completely redesigned in summer 2016 and is now called the [Academic Integrity tutorials](#). Particular emphasis was put on paraphrasing skills. Further research needs to be done to determine if an online tutorial is the best way to teach paraphrasing skills.
  
3. The entire Assessment in Action project is being redone in fall 2016 in order to determine the effects of changing the Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson, reciting the Honor Code at Convocation and the total redesign of the Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial.