

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

**Prepared by:** Jacalyn Kremer, DiMenna-Nyselius Library

**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**

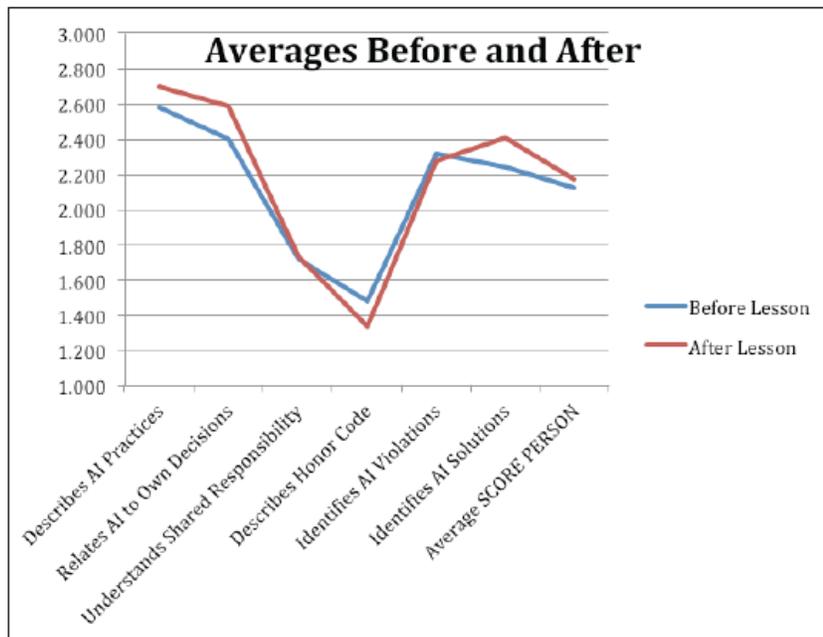
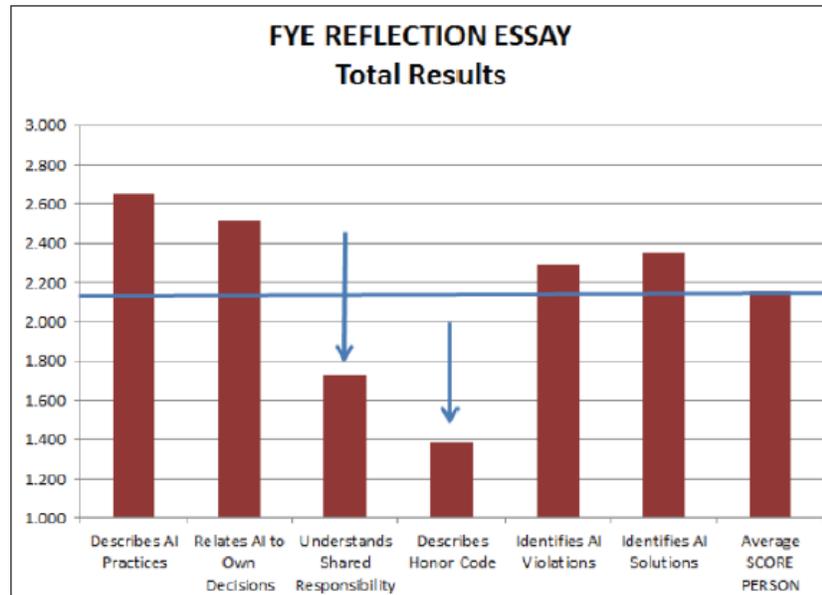
The goals of the Assessment in Action research were to determine the effect of library created learning modules on first-years' (a) understanding of academic integrity, and (b) knowledge/skills for citing sources to avoid plagiarism. The two modules embedded into the First Year Experience program are:

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

**Results**

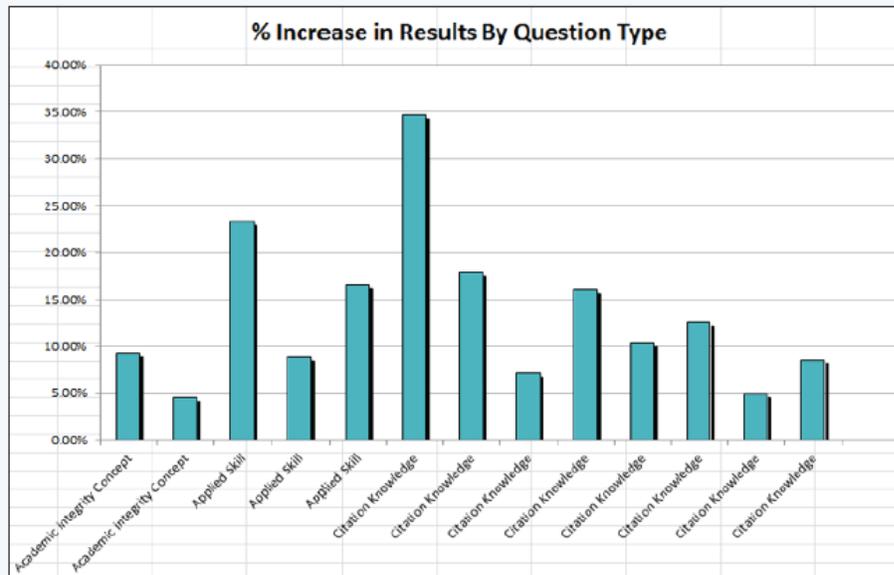
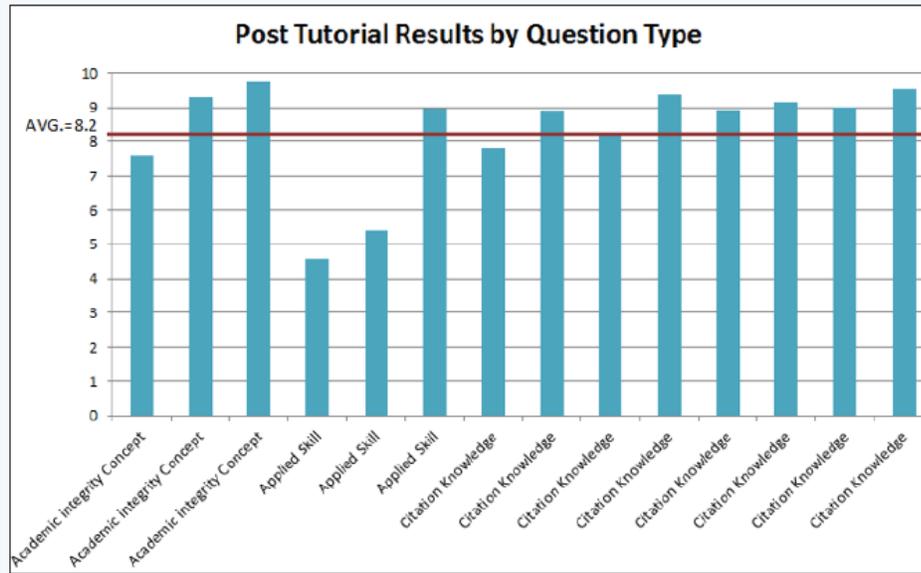
1. The Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson developed by the Library and taught in the First Year Experience program positively impacts first year students' ability to relate academic integrity practices to their own behaviors and identify solutions to their own behaviors. Although both before and after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



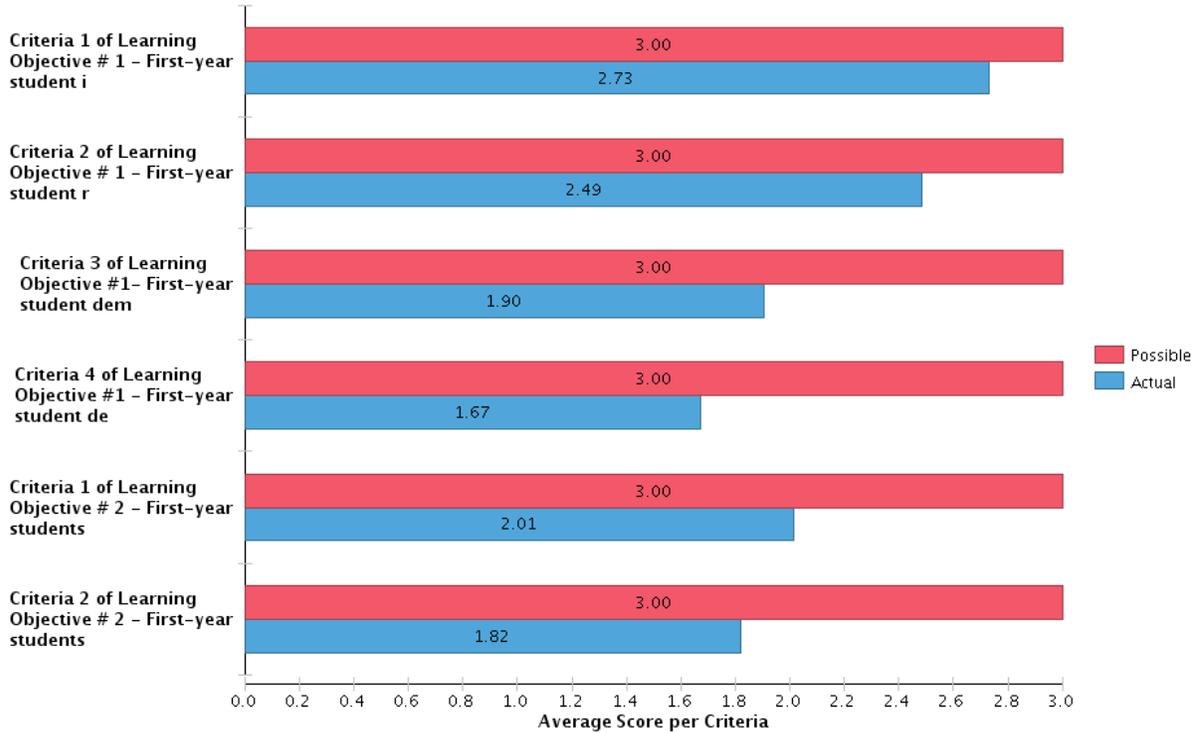
## **Recommendations and Steps Taken**

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.

## Update: What We Learned in Assessing Fall 2016 Lesson & Tutorial:

### Data:

#### Fall 2016 FYE Reflection Essay Scoring



#### Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson Results Comparison

	Describes AI Practices	Relates AI to OWN Decisions	Shared responsibility	Honor Code	Identifies Personal AI Violations	Identifies Personal AI Solutions	Average SCORE PERSON
2013 After Lesson Essays Scoring	2.69	2.58	1.73	1.34	2.28	2.41	2.17
2016 After Lesson Essays Scoring	2.73	2.49	1.9	1.67	2.01	1.82	2.1
Change	0.04	-0.09	0.17	0.33	-0.27	-0.59	-0.07
% change	1.3%	-3.5%	9.5%	24.6%	-11.8%	-24.5%	-3.2%

The above results suggest that the efforts to increase students understating of academic integrity as a shared community responsibility and of the Honor Code have made a positive impact but these two areas are still weak. In addition, we saw a significant decrease in students' communicating their OWN challenges to integrity practices and their potential solutions to these personal challenges. Inconsistencies in the delivery of the lesson through all the FYE courses may account for the decrease in these two learning outcomes scores.

**Academic Integrity Tutorial Results** (see infographic @ <https://www.fairfield.edu/media/fairfielduniversitywebsite/images/library/ai-tutorial-2016.png>)

Significant improvements were seen in the administration of the new 2016 Academic Integrity tutorial. There was virtually 100% compliance with all first-years taking and COMPLETING the tutorial. In 2015 we saw only about 80% starting the tutorial and then a 10% drop off in completing it. Students spent less time taking the new tutorial while achieving similar results. Administration with Blackboard was smooth.

Comparing the 2015 tutorial results with the 2016 tutorial results:

1. Overall, students scored similarly and well, averaging 88% correct in 2015 and 89% in 2016. Students come to us with a foundational knowledge of plagiarism.
2. There are two continuing areas of concern:
  - a. 35% of students could not identify correct examples of paraphrasing
  - b. 16% of students did not realize changing only a few words in another's work is still considered plagiarism

**Further Action Taken:**

**Academic Integrity Classroom Lesson**

The possibility of inconsistencies in the delivery of the lesson accounting for the decrease in two learning outcomes scores (students' communicating their OWN challenges to integrity practices and their potential solutions to these personal challenges) was discussed with the head of the FYE program and the associate dean of student engagement. We hope in 2017 to see these scores go back up.

**Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial**

1. Regarding students ability to paraphrase, we believe it is important to work with writing faculty to build student skill sets in this area. A librarian is now working closely with the Core Writing initiative and will bring forth this issue.
2. The tutorial was modified to emphasize that changing only a few words in another's work is still considered plagiarism.
3. Librarians will review language of multiple choices questions and possibly modify to pinpoint student's understanding.