Numerous case studies describing individual community college libraries’ instruction programs have been published, but there have been few attempts to identify common characteristics of these programs. This study describes the results of a survey in which documentation from the instruction programs of 15 North Carolina community college libraries was analyzed against program design guidelines from the ACRL’s “Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries” document. The study found no correlation between variables describing the parent institutions of these libraries and the degree to which the libraries’ instructional programming appeared to adhere to the ACRL guidelines; however, given the educational importance of community colleges to a very large and diverse student body with a variety of information needs, further research in this area is recommended. This study suggests that such research should avoid a methodology in which internal documentation is chosen to represent instruction programs.

Headings:

Library surveys

Community college libraries -- North Carolina

Library Orientation -- Standards

Information Services -- User education
RESULTS OF A SURVEY TO DETERMINE COMPLIANCE OF NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARY INSTRUCTION PROGRAMS WITH ACRL GUIDELINES

by

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A Master’s paper submitted to the faculty of the School of Information and Library Science of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Library Science.

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Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................. 2

Literature Review ............................................. 4

Methodology .................................................. 13

Results ......................................................... 20

Discussion ..................................................... 25

Conclusion ...................................................... 27

References ..................................................... 29
Introduction

For a vast number of Americans, community colleges are an indispensable educational resource. In fact, nearly half of U.S. undergraduates are served by community colleges, which in 2005 amounted to over 6.5 million students (“Students at Community Colleges”). Though a recent “boom” in enrollment appears to be waning, enrollment at these institutions continues to be very high; the enrollment for 2011 was 22 percent higher than the enrollment for 2007 (Fain, 2011). In recent decades, community college enrollment has also often significantly outpaced that of four-year colleges. For example, enrollment in 2-year colleges increased by 18 percent between 1998 and 2002, while enrollment at 4-year institutions rose only 11 percent during that period (Warren 298).

The set of people for whom community colleges provide educational opportunities is extremely large as well as highly diverse, both demographically and educationally. More than a third of students belong to a minority group, and the majority of black and Hispanic students are enrolled in community colleges (“Students at Community Colleges”). Enrollment of foreign-born students increased by over 35 percent in community colleges from 2000-2002 (Warren 300). Fifty-nine percent of students at these institutions are women, and many students are older than those usually attending four-year colleges, with an average student age of 29 (“Students at Community Colleges”).
Community colleges are also crucial educational resources for many people because they fulfill educational needs for which universities and four-year colleges do not provide. Warren describes these functions of community colleges as “academic transfer preparation, vocational-technical education, developmental education, continuing education, and community service” (Warren 297).

These different student backgrounds and educational paths create a wide variety of information literacy needs; for example, a student who is pursuing a dental hygienist certification will need different information skills from one who is attempting to transfer to a university to pursue a humanities degree. Many of the students who enter community colleges may require significant information literacy training as well; Latham and Gross (369) point out that in 2004 40% of community college students enrolled in remedial education courses, and community colleges are responding by offering more information literacy classes. A 2008 article from the Chronicle of Higher Education points out that these class offerings increased nearly 40% between 2006 and 2007 (Foster).

Given the large number of people they serve, the demographic and educational diversity of those students and their unique information literacy needs, one would expect significant interest in community colleges among library scholars. Unfortunately, they have not received as much scholarly attention as academic libraries in the professional literature. Most of the work which has been published on their library instruction programs has consisted of case studies or descriptions of single institutions, and very few surveys or descriptions of trends have been published. This study will describe the information literacy programming of a set of community college libraries by comparing them against a set of information literacy standards for academic libraries.
Literature Review

Recent History of Information Literacy Instruction in Community College Libraries

Although Branch and Gilchrist show that as early as the 1930’s community college librarians were becoming aware of the library’s role in teaching information literacy skills, full-fledged instructional programs at community and technical college libraries did not become common until the 1960’s and 70’s; the authors point to the 1971 publication of the ACRL “Guidelines for Two-Year College Learning Resources and Programs,” which included several prescriptions for library instruction, as evidence of an increasing awareness of the importance of this area of community college librarianship.

The elements of library instruction during that time period can be determined from a survey cited by Branch and Gilchrist. This survey, conducted in 1978 by John Lolley, found that although community college libraries offered a variety of instructional programming and resources, the most common methods used were as follows: 82 percent of libraries used tours, 70 percent used orientation lectures and 58 percent used course related instruction. It is important to note that the first two of these instructional methods (tours and orientation lectures) are typically one-time events, which likely are not part of an overarching, systematic library instruction plan. As Lolley points out, the “primary reason” librarians continued to utilize tours and lectures “is that it is quick and easy, requiring little preparation and expense and conductible by almost any member of the library including student aides” (63). Even course-related instruction, which was claimed
by 58 percent of community college libraries responding to his survey, appeared to be
delivered in a way that was far from systematic:

Of the 337 academic libraries in the Southeastern Library Association survey, practically
all of the reporting libraries indicated that personnel assigned to orientation and
instruction was on a part-time basis, with only six libraries (2 percent) providing full-time
persons for the program, three of them being in junior and community colleges (Lolley
63).

Lolley’s conclusion is that, despite how it initially appears, “the majority of instructional
programs in community-junior colleges are not really instructional at all, but fall into the
category of library orientation” (63).

By the 1990’s, the types of instruction offered at community college libraries
began to change. According to Branch and Gilchrist, community college library
instruction programs began to exhibit two trends: the first was an increasing emphasis on
teaching the use of information technology, and the second was an increase in
 collaborative and outreach activity with faculty and other departments within the parent
institution. Although it was broad, Branch and Gilchrist’s 1996 survey of community
college library instructional offerings was not systematic, so their article does not provide
statistics. Nevertheless, they do furnish numerous specific examples from a wide variety
of community and technical college libraries as evidence for these 1990’s trends.

A decade after Branch and Gilchrist’s article, Warren updated their overview of
community college library instruction programs. She noted that while the trends toward
incorporating information technology and collaboration have continued and expanded,
community college library instruction programs in the 21st century have also been
 influenced by several new factors. The first factor is that enrollment at their parent
institutions has increased dramatically since 1998, significantly outstripping enrollment
in four-year colleges; while enrollment at two-year colleges rose 18 percent from 1998-2002, four-year colleges only saw an 11 percent increase (Warren 298). The second factor affecting community colleges since the 1990’s is that the student body has become even more diverse in a number of ways:

The percentage of minority community college students increased from 28.5 percent in 1995 to 33.3 percent in 2002. In 1995-1996, 12.5 percent of public community college students spoke a language other than English as their primary language at home. Only four years later, 14.4 percent of the students spoke a language other than English as their primary language at home. An increasing number of community colleges have been officially identified as Hispanic-serving institutions because more than 25 percent of their enrollment is Hispanic. The number of foreign students in public two year colleges increased by more than 35 percent from fall 2000 to fall 2002 (Warren 300).

In addition to this increase in cultural and linguistic diversity, the goals of these new students are often different from previous generations. The number of community college students planning on obtaining no degree or certification dropped from 3 to 1.1 percent between 1995-1996 and 2003-2004, and the percentage of students at these colleges intending pursue a post-baccalaureate degree of some kind rose from 38.8 to 43.7 in that period (Warren 300).

In addition to increasing enrollment and diversity, Warren points out two additional 21st century trends affecting community college library instruction. Many librarians are turning to information literacy standards documents for guidance when they modify their instruction programs. The most influential of these documents is ACRL “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education”, which was published in 2000. The final trend described by Warren, which is directly related to the emphasis on standards documents mentioned above is that community college libraries are beginning to receive a “mandate from beyond the library” to refine their IL instruction programs (299). This mandate is coming from “accrediting agencies,
professional organizations, and state departments of education,” and, unsurprisingly, it
very often takes the form of standards documents (298).

Demographic and technological factors have arisen in the community college
landscape which have motivated instruction librarians to seek a way to expand their
offerings while addressing a diverse set of informational needs, and the changes which
have arisen from these factors have often been guided by standards documents.
Recognizing this historical background allows us to better understand 21st century
initiatives to improve community college instruction programs, so we will now review
some examples of these.

21st Century Instructional Strategies

The professional literature provides numerous examples of new strategies
librarians have been experimenting with to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and
range of their instructional strategies in the face of the challenges elucidated by Warren.
Throughout the examples provided here, mention will be made of the relationship
between the instructional strategy and “standardization,” by which I mean a conscious
attempt to bring programming into line with at least some aspect of documents, usually
published by some kind of professional association or governing body, which make
prescriptions for instructional programs. As we will see, librarians are often motivated
and guided by a variety of different factors beyond just standards documents when
making changes to an instructional program: among these are anecdotal information,
more formal studies undertaken at their institution and case studies from the professional
literature. However, proceeding from Warren’s observation that community college
library instruction programs are becoming increasingly concerned with standards, we will pay special attention to this aspect.

Mannan and Placke describe how, due to a hike in enrollment and an expansion of the library staff and facilities, librarians at Ivy Tech Community College library restructured their instruction program, rather than just increase the number of classes they were teaching. While they originally focused on one-shot classes for both English and general education classes and might have attempted to simply increase the number of these, they instead consulted ACRL information literacy standards to develop outcomes. They also created a specific presentation which would be part of any library instruction taught at the college and developed a series of classes which built upon one another to progressively improve students’ information literacy. In an attempt to provide students with more effective instruction, the program expanded in a way which referenced standards and mapped out outcomes, course offerings and part of what would be taught in classes ahead of time, moving away from the more ad-hoc nature of one-shot instruction which was common in past decades. Similarly, Moore, Brewster et al describe how the “growth and increasing complexity” of online resources spurred the librarians at Glendale Community College to review their instructional program (300). Once again, they shifted from a reliance and focus on one-shot/on-demand sessions to a program which eventually included two credit courses, six standardized weekly workshops on various aspects of information literacy and special courses paired with English and nursing classes. As was the case with Ivy Tech, the Glendale librarians also consciously modeled parts of their new instructional offerings after ACRL standards (specifically, the “Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction”). Furthermore, they also found a statistically significant
improvement in pass rates for English classes among students who attended the new workshops.

Lastly, O’Malley describes how the librarians of the Jefferson Community & Technical College’s Downtown Campus decided to overhaul their instructional program after discovering by means of a survey that “the majority of students” at their institution “exhibited a lack of skills in finding, retrieving, synthesizing, and evaluating information,” with “more than half the students...not [understanding] basic [information literacy] concepts” (16). This situation arose after a decade of using course-related instruction, mostly of the “one-shot” variety, which the librarians acknowledged was insufficient. In addition to their own experience, they used the ACRL standards and the Kentucky Community & Technical College System mission to identify the competencies which they would design new instructional offerings to provide. The result was a credit-bearing course which, unlike the one-shot instruction, was able to progressively impair IL skills over multiple meetings. They found that “students improved their skills for developing a research strategy and evaluating information sources by more than 45 percent,” as measured with an assessment test they designed (18).

Diversity and Standardization

Community college librarians making changes to their instructional programs within the last decade have often used standards documents to help guide their decisions. While these standards are sometimes designed specifically for a specific set of community colleges (usually promulgated by a regional accrediting agency), the ACRL standards, which also apply to four-year colleges and universities, are also cited
(O’Malley, Mannan and Placke, Moore et al, Bruch and Frank). Given that community college students often have very different backgrounds and career plans from those attending 4-year universities, the question arises how relevant these more general academic library standards might be for community college IL programs. Bird et al explore this question by comparing the different sets of information literacy skills required by vocational or technical students and those which students going on to pursue a 4-year degree require. They conducted a survey and focus groups among instructional librarians at community colleges to determine whether or not their institutions offered IL instruction tailored to vocational and technical students, or whether their programming was identical with more common academically-oriented IL offerings. Although most respondents claimed that there was a difference in their programming, the strategies and skills covered in the classes was largely the same: in their survey “seventy-five [of 190] respondents noted that only 0-10 percent of their IL instruction focused on vocational or technical programs, and another 63 percent chose 11 to 20 percent as a description of the time devoted to such IL skills” (26). Their focus group results often indicated that librarians did not understand the information needs of these vocational/technical groups, and the authors suggest the librarians’ educational backgrounds may cause “a bias toward baccalaureate-trained, professional use of information and libraries which is infused into present IL practice” (29). Bird et al’s research, while dealing with the difference between vocational/technical IL and academic IL, raises the even broader question of how community colleges can possibly hope to design IL instruction programs which accord with the highly diverse backgrounds and needs of their students. Examining the ACRL’s “Information Literacy Competency Standards for High Education,” however, reveals that
although the document does contain specific prescriptions, such as the desired outcome that an information literate student “develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need,” which might be irrelevant to a student studying for an HVAC certification (to use Bird et al’s example), the majority of outcomes and standards described in the document are abstract enough that they represent thinking skills which students can transmit into a variety of information settings. The “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education”, which is commonly cited in the literature, defines information literacy as “a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.” While an appeal to such a standard diverges from Bird et al’s mandate that “vocational and technical community colleges need to customize IL instruction, making its skills relevant for each and every industry” (23), the competencies described in the ACRL document still constitute a way of thinking which is broadly useful to students, regardless of career path, and which transcends the rote “focus on using a particular database or discussing plagiarism” which Bird et al recommend against for such a broad body of students (23).

**Conclusion**

When community college library instruction became widespread in the 1960’s and 70’s, it typically took the form of a set of tours, lectures and very sporadic course related instruction which were not systematically arranged into cohesive programs. As technological changes and collaboration with faculty became more common, programs started to become more diverse, and by the 21st century the increasing enrollment and
diversity of the student body forced librarians to review their instructional programs. These revisions were guided by standards documents and agencies external to the library, which recognized its role in transmitting information literacy instruction. While there appears to be an inherent tension between standardization of instructional programs and the diversity of the community college student body, and therefore their information needs, standards documents such as the ACRL’s “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education” reflect thinking skills which are general and abstract enough that they should apply to all types of students. It is therefore unsurprising that the literature furnishes a number of examples of librarians updating their instructional programs in ways which are modeled after these standards.

While there are many articles describing case studies of new instructional offerings at single institutions, the literature is largely silent regarding overall trends in 21st century community college library instruction programs taken as a group. This study will attempt to discover a trend towards such standardization in a larger set of community college library instruction programs.
Methodology

Having observed that community college library instruction programs have been undergoing significant changes in the past two decades and that formal standards (especially ACRL standards) are often cited in the documentation of these changes, it remains to be seen to what degree a larger body of community college library instruction programs comply with ACRL recommendations in their instruction programs. This study was motivated by a desire to answer this question, and, in a broader sense, to contribute a descriptive survey of community college library instruction programs to the professional literature, in which such surveys are rare.

Study Design

The first consideration in designing this study was to determine which ACRL document would be used to analyze the instruction programs. While “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education” is the most commonly cited ACRL document in the studies described previously, those standards focus on characteristics of, and skills learned by, students. It is also a very extensive document, comprising a set of standards which each include multiple performance indicators, which themselves each mandate multiple outcomes. Therefore, the number of variables included in this document, combined with its focus on characteristics of students as opposed to the instructional programs themselves means that while this standards
document would be an excellent tool with which to conduct a thorough assessment of a single program or class, it is ill-suited to a wider survey of library instruction programs.

A related document from the ACRL, titled “Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries,” has several advantages for the purposes of this study. It is focused on characteristics of instruction programs, and not those of students. The document also contains fewer variables, as it is divided into two overarching parts – “Program Design” and “Support,” with each part containing five components. Each of these five components consists of a title and a short description, sometimes containing a list of examples, of ways in which these abstract concepts might manifest themselves within a program. These two advantages make the “Guidelines” a better assessment tool for a wider survey of institutions, and so it was selected as the basis for measuring programs in this study.

While the “Guidelines” present fewer variables than the “Information Literacy Competency Standards,” there are still enough that attempting to address all of them would be beyond the scope of this study. For this reason, the study was designed to focus specifically on the “Program Design” half of the document rather than the “Support” half. The “Support” section consists of guidelines that relate to the facilities and internal practices of instructional programs. While it may have been possible to remotely assess the aspects of these guidelines that relate to human resources and staff support, it would have been difficult to address those relating to facilities without actually physically inspecting these locations. Furthermore, the study is intended to gauge how aware instructional librarians are of ACRL guidelines and how they are attempting to
implement them; the “Program Design” section is therefore more informative than the “Support” section for the purposes of this study.

The researcher concluded that the “Program Design” section of the “Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries” presented the best set of standards or benchmarks for measuring the ACRL compliance of library instruction programs. Since the goal of the study was to describe a set of institutions, a survey method was adopted. A survey design in which librarians were asked to rate how well their institutions measured up to an abstract set of standards with which they may or may not be familiar was recognized as problematic, especially given that this method could significantly hinder response rates by requiring busy librarians to not only refer to but to also completely understand a standards document. For this reason, it was deemed necessary to design the survey in such a way that the materials representing each library’s instruction program went beyond the opinions and perceptions of single librarians. The survey was therefore designed in such a way that it requested that the staff of each library send certain types of documentation (both official and unofficial) from their library’s instruction program. This approach would provide better evidence of the presence or absence of these ACRL components in the instruction programs of these libraries. The libraries were asked for five types of documents which were intended to demonstrate the presence or absence of the five components of the “Program Design” section of the “Guidelines”.

Having decided to request documents that match up with components described in the “Program Design” section of the “Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries”, the exact language of the request sent out to libraries was recognized to be an important consideration. It was decided that the survey should be phrased in such a way
that, rather than asking the librarians to themselves identify the ACRL standards in their institution’s practices, it would request specific examples of types of documents, and these examples would be modeled after those provided in the “Guidelines”. This request was phrased in this manner so that the librarians would have an easier time identifying and locating relevant documents which, it was hoped, would in turn increase the response rate of the survey. The instructions on this point were phrased exactly as follows:

Please collect electronic copies of about five official or unofficial documents which correspond most closely to the five types of documents listed below. I am looking for documents that already exist, so if your institution doesn't have one of the following please just indicate that you don't have it. These are the documents I would like you to send:

1) A statement of purpose or mission statement for the library’s instructional program.
2) A statement of explicit learning outcomes (can be for single classes and/or the library's instruction program as a whole).
3) A document demonstrating that multiple instructional strategies and services are present in the library's instructional offerings (e.g. libguides AND one-shot instruction AND reference interviews, use of multiple kinds of technology in the program etc.).
4) A document showing the instruction program has multiple, interconnected components (most likely this will be a description of the program as a whole).
5) Some sort of evaluation or assessment plan for the library's instruction program.

The final consideration was the body of institutions to be included in the survey. It was decided that sending the survey to all 58 community colleges in North Carolina would, on the one hand, allow for a diverse set of community and technical colleges to be included and, on the other, keep the number of response manageable. Thus, the study instructions were sent first to an email listserv for North Carolina library directors and then to instruction, reference and head librarians at each institution when the initial response rate was too low.
Analytical Method

Once the responses were received, some method for determining whether they met each of the five ACRL components had to be adopted. The study was originally intended to include a content analysis of the documents received from the libraries, but the volume and diversity of the materials received, combined with the relatively abstract nature of the ACRL Guidelines, necessitated another approach. Furthermore, the Guidelines have numerous suggestions for each component, and it seemed unreasonable to expect a program to address every single point to count it as being compliant with that component; such a method could make the survey very uninformative by forcing the same judgment of “non-compliant” on libraries which had absolutely nothing to show for their program as well as on those which addressed a good number, but not all, of the suggestions for a component. For this reason, it was decided that as long as a program documents included something which matched both the title of a component and even one example under that component’s description in the “Guidelines,” the program would, for the purposes of the study, be deemed to be compliant on that point. For example, the first component is “Statement of purpose.” It states that:

The library should have a written mission statement for its instructional program that:

- articulates its purpose for the instruction program in the context of the educational mission of the institution and the needs of the learning community;
- involves its institutional community in the formulation of campus-wide information literacy goals and general outcomes;
- aligns its goals with the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, and clearly states a definition of information literacy;
- recognizes the diverse nature of the learning community, including the varieties of learning styles, attitudes, educational levels, life experiences, cultures, technology skill levels, and other learner variables such as proximity to the campus itself (distance learning students);
- recognizes that instruction programs prepare learners not only for immediate curricular activities, but also for experiences with information use beyond the classroom in work settings, careers, continuing education and self-development, and lifelong learning in general; and
• reflects changes to the institution and learning community through regular
review and revision when appropriate (Guidelines for Instruction Programs in
Academic Libraries).

It seemed unlikely that many libraries would be able to meet every single one of these
points, so to avoid an uninformative set of results in which very few of the libraries (if
any) were found to be compliant on any of the points, the policy mentioned above was
adopted, in which a library would be counted as compliant on a component (for the
purposes of the study) if it had something in its documents that matched the basic
title/description of that component and at least one additional feature or example from the
component’s description.

The results of this method of document analysis can be seen in a few examples.
When (as frequently happened) a library only sent a copy of a post-instruction test as
their response for item number five (for which “some sort of evaluation or assessment
plan for the library's instruction program” was requested), it was not counted, as the basic
ACRL description in the “Guidelines” for this item states that it should be a “program
assessment plan” and that “evaluation and assessment of an instruction program are
systematic ongoing processes.” This is why a plan reflecting the entire program was
requested as opposed to an individual item related to one class. Similarly, another
library’s statement that they did not have any documented explicit learning outcomes,
either for their program or classes as a whole, but that they used ACRL guidelines was
not counted, since the “Guidelines’” basic description of that component states that
“programs…should have clearly articulated learning outcomes that are aligned with
ACRL’s “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education” as well as
with local institutional standards and outcomes,” and the survey instructions asked for
this as “a statement of explicit learning outcomes.” Conversely, a library which sent in an entire internal PowerPoint presentation in which ACRL learning standards were discussed and different approaches to each were recommended was counted as being compliant on that point, as this is an example of explicitly stating learning outcomes.

Once a method of determining what would count as compliance to one of the components was decided upon, some variables which may help to explain differences between programs were considered for inclusion in the study for the sake of providing informative contrasts. These were selected from reports on the North Carolina Community College website and included the following (all of which represented the 2010-2011 year): 1) full-time staff; 2) annual student enrollment; 3) annual student enrollment in associate’s degree programs; and 4) Curriculum and Continuing Education Budget full-time equivalent. These variables, along with the apparent compliance or non-compliance of each community college library on each of the five ACRL “Guidelines” components, were compiled, compared and analyzed.
**Results**

Of the fifty-eight libraries to which the survey was sent, complete responses were received from fifteen, yielding a response rate of 25.8 percent. The participating libraries served a wide variety of institutions. The largest community college by total student enrollment responding to the survey had an enrollment of 61,095 students in the 2010-2011 school year, while the smallest had 3,925. The largest institution by student enrollment in associate’s degree programs, which was included in the study because the associate’s degree students often have information needs similar to those of traditional 4-year students, had 24,157 students enrolled in such programs, while the smallest had only 735 associate’s degree students. The largest participating institution by number of full-time staff was 13 times as large as the smallest, with 1079 staff to that institution’s 83. The full-time equivalency budget ranged from 16,919 to 1,018. The average number of full-time staff of the responding institutions was 351, the average total student enrollment 19,748, the average number of students enrolled in associate’s degree programs was 6,401 and the average curriculum and continuing education budget FTE was 5,773.
2010-2011 Annual Student Enrollment and Annual Student Enrollment in Associate’s Degree Programs at Participating Community Colleges

Annual Full-time Staff at Fifteen Participating Community Colleges (2010-2011)
Only two of the 15 responding institutions demonstrated that they had a “written mission statement for [their] instructional program.” Several institutions sent in the mission statements of their library as a whole, which often contained a bullet point or sentence regarding instruction. However, the ACRL document clearly states that compliance on its first component requires a statement for the instructional program itself; this makes sense since the description of this component in the document does, as we have seen, stipulate that quite a few features should be present in the mission statement, and it would be difficult to fit more than one or two of these into a sentence or bullet point. Therefore, only those institutions which sent in a mission statement which was attached specifically to the instruction program and contained at least one of the features from the ACRL document’s description for that component were counted.

For the second component, five of the fifteen responding libraries showed that they had “clearly articulated learning outcomes” and/or “local institutional standards and outcomes.” Eleven of the fifteen demonstrated multiple modes of instruction for the third
component. Only two of the fifteen were able to produce any documentation which demonstrated some kind of overarching program structure (the fourth component) and only four had any type of assessment plan (the fifth and final component). While many institutions sent in an assessment quiz to be used with one of their classes, this was not counted as it does not represent a “plan”; the ACRL document stipulates that an assessment plan consist of “systematic ongoing processes,” which further indicates that something beyond a single quiz is required (“Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries”).

After totaling the components which the documentation for the libraries’ instruction programs appeared to contain, it was discovered that: only one library’s instruction program had documents to demonstrate all five components from the ACRL “Guidelines”; none of the libraries’ documents demonstrated four components; three libraries’ documents contained three components; three libraries’ documents demonstrated two components; and four each demonstrated zero and one components.
The enrollment, budget and staffing variables of the institutions to which the responding libraries were attached were run through Excel and JMP to check for a statistical correlation between these variables and the number of ACRL components which the libraries’ instruction programs seemed to encompass, as determined through analysis of their documentation. Although, predictably, there was a statistical correlation between number of full-time staff, number of students, number of students in associate’s degree programs and budget FTE, there was, surprisingly, no statistical correlation between any of these variables and the number of ACRL components the library’s instruction program demonstrated.
Discussion

The result of this study, namely that there appears to be no statistical correlation between enrollment, staff and budget variables related to the participating institutions and the number of ACRL “Guidelines” components evinced by documents related to their instruction program, is surprising. It may be that the studies cited in the literature review section of this paper which reference ACRL standards are unusual cases, and that the majority of community college libraries simply do not attempt to align themselves with these standards in any systematic way. Since this study was conducted among North Carolina community college libraries, there may be some local standards, recommendations or practices which affected the way in which these libraries organized their instruction programs and which took precedence above the ACRL standards. Conversely, it may be that community college librarians are not as concerned with creating documentation for their instructional programs to the degree which this study, which took documents as the best indicator of the organization and intended purpose of the libraries’ instructional programs, presupposed; this is a strong possibility, as many librarians responded for the researcher’s request for documents by stating that their program is organized informally by arrangements between colleagues, and that they have never attempted to document their programs. In light of the very small staffs many of these libraries have, this is not surprising. Another explanation is that the ACRL documents and definition of information literacy do not map neatly onto the practices of community college library instruction programs and the needs of their patrons; this may
strengthen Bird et al’s suggestion that there may be multiple information literacies for community college students which depend on their goals and educational paths.

Further research which describes trends and general characteristics of community college library instruction programs is definitely warranted, since community colleges serve such a large and diverse body of students with a variety of unique information needs. However, the results of this study suggest that if a survey-based methodology is used then reliance on internal library documents as the primary study materials should be avoided. One would strongly expect there to be significant differences between the instruction programs of a community college library which serves a student body of over 60,000 and one which serves under 4,000, but, as this study has shown, the documentation these two libraries would produce to correspond to those instruction programs would most likely not demonstrate substantial differences.

Additionally, the present study has a limited frame of reference, as it only compares variables describing each institution’s budget, enrollment and staff with its library’s apparent compliance to the ACRL “Guidelines”. Further research in this area would benefit by comparing the ACRL compliance of community colleges with small and large colleges or universities, at which point a comparison could be made between the different types of institutions.
Conclusion

The professional literature which deals with the instructional programming of community college libraries suggests that these programs, in general, are changing. From the case studies and surveys which have been published, it appears that they are becoming increasingly complex, and that written standards documents, such as those published by the ACRL, have influenced the design or redesign of these programs in recent years. For this reason, the present study was executed with the intention of determining how prevalent a set of instructional program components from the ACRL “Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries” were among North Carolina community college libraries. The result was that, at least among the 15 participating institutions, there was no correlation between the staff, general enrollment, associate’s degree enrollment or full-time equivalency budget figures of each institution and the number of ACRL components the instruction program of the institution’s library demonstrated. This conclusion raises further questions about how concerned community college librarians are with these documents, how concerned they are with thoroughly documenting their instructional programs, how relevant these particular formulations of information literacy and instruction are to community college library practices and how community college libraries compare to those of 4-year colleges and universities in the area of instruction. It is hoped that these questions will spur further research into community college library instruction, since the unique information literacy needs of
community college students and the ways in which libraries attempt to meet them are underrepresented in the professional literature.
References


