The Use of Concept Mapping/Pattern Matching to Determine the Content Domain for Information Literacy in Baccalaureate Education

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Abstract:
This study assessed the relevance of a national association’s standards for developing information literacy competency in undergraduate students at a mid-sized, regional university in Maryland. Key stakeholders responsible for ensuring student success in achieving information literacy competency at the institution were solicited for their expertise to identify the outcomes they consider to indicate information literacy competency. The group of 14 participants included six faculty, three librarians, three student affairs professionals, and two students. Trochim’s Concept Mapping/Pattern Matching methodology was used for gathering and analyzing the data to conceptualize the domain of information literacy competencies. The key stakeholders generated 80 student learning outcomes for information literacy. Using multidimensional scaling and hierarchical cluster analysis, the outcomes were grouped into eight clusters representing the content domain for information literacy. Following the creation of the concept maps, the resulting priorities and their conceptualization schema were compared to the national organization’s standards for similarities and differences in a
qualitative document analysis. They were also compared to the learning outcomes for information literacy currently associated with the institution’s general education curriculum and the library’s instruction program. The study revealed four conclusions. First, the national standards for information literacy are relevant at the local level. Second, there is a need for academic libraries to reevaluate their existing information literacy outcomes to reflect changes in information dissemination from a textual bias to include multi-media. Third, it is important for academic institutions to include representation of all stakeholders when developing student learning outcomes. Fourth, ambiguity still exists among stakeholders in regard to the effectiveness of teaching information literacy.