Teaching Teachers: A Study of Factors Impacting the Information Literacy of Teacher Education Students

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Introduction

Information literacy is probably the biggest contributor to our success in society and democracy, and where we stand as citizens in this country. I think it's part of a bigger picture, and that's why it's so critical that it needs to be on university campuses...

~UNLV Teacher Education Major

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Background

- Information literacy and teacher education curriculum

- Information literacy and teacher education program accreditation standards

- Information literacy and new standards for K-12 student learning

- The future work of teacher education students

- RESEARCH GAP: direct assessment of information literacy skills of teacher education majors

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University of Nevada, Las Vegas

- Total enrollment 27,000
- 82% NV residents, 4% international
- > 50% racial and/or ethnic minorities

Clark County School District:

- 5th largest school district in the U.S.A.
- 331,029 students in 377 schools

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Methodology

- 152 students in junior-level courses in the UNLV College of Education, Department of Teaching and Learning (21.7%)

- Administered iSkills test, demographic survey

- Focus group discussions (10 students)

iSkills Assessment

- Developed by ETS
- Scenario based
- 14 items
- Web based
- One hour
- Measures seven competency areas: Define, Access, Evaluate, Manage, Integrate, Create, Communicate
- Scores range from 0-500; "cut score" is 260

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Results

- Mean Score: 248.2

- Standard Deviation: 67.6

- Median Score: 250

- 66 of 152 students (43.4%) met or exceeded cut score of 260
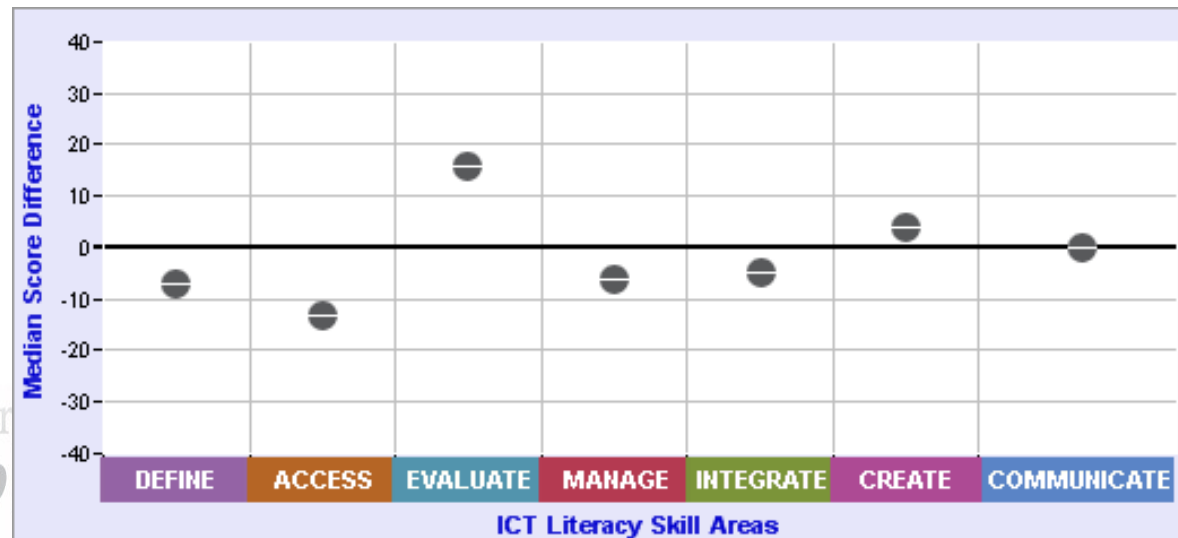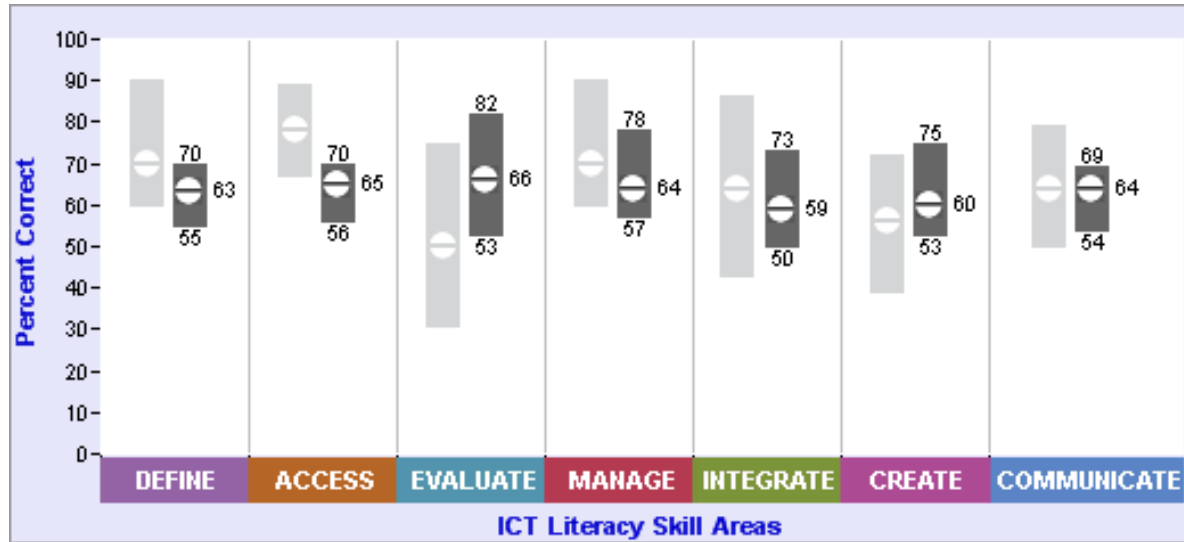
Results

Focus Groups

Criticisms of the test: Lack of flexibility, creativity

I think information literacy, there's not a time limit on it.

*I think [technology] is **reversible**. You can go back and fix it, where I didn't feel like I could go back and fix this.*

*I always think with information technology and how you organize and share information, it's so – you could be so **creative** doing it.*

Focus Groups

Collaboration as essential component of Information Literacy

I think a big part of information literacy is being able to take others' opinions and morph them so that they make more sense.

More and more we are seeing sites and blogs from teachers across the nation that are doing things and it's such a collaborative thing ... You have this wealth of information to be able to see what our peers are doing as professionals across the country.

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Focus Groups

Value of the test, regardless of discipline

> *If we don't use those skills often, we have no gauge of how good we are at using those skills, nor do we even care at that point until we have to use it ... I think it's a really good indicator; [iSkills] really brings to light what you are and are not good at."*

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Focus Groups

Teacher as connector, in a changing educational landscape

As a teacher you're connecting - we have to show students how to find their information, process it, understand it. I think a lot of it is just, if I'm being honest, lazy, that the skills are there and they're innate and once you become a teacher, a professional, it's kicking into overdrive.

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Next Steps

- Variables affecting information literacy skills (e.g., curriculum)

- Comparison with students from Brigham Young University
  - Student demographics differ
  - Program differs (cohorts)

- Possible next stage: Early career K-12 teachers

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Questions?

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