

Will it Blend?

Information literacy program innovation using blended learning course redesign models

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Background

- Project Objective: design, develop, implement, communicate, assess, and scholarly disseminate a pilot model for the delivery of 'blended learning' library instruction in five undergraduate courses
- Blended Learning: "a pedagogical approach that combines the effectiveness and socialization aspects of the classroom with the technologically enhanced active learning possibilities of the online environment"¹
- Based on NCAT 'Replacement model' some in-class time replaced with out-of-class, online, interactive learning activities²
- Goals: to enhance learning outcomes and reduce face-to-face IL instruction by 50%

Project Process

- Targeted five large-enrollment, first year courses (Sociology, Geography, Social Science Inquiry) with existing library relationships
- A Steering Committee oversaw the project with several working committees: Assessment, Communication, plus a committee for each course
- Used project management techniques e.g. project plan with timeline and milestones, communication plan, identified key stakeholders, success factors, obstacles/barriers
- A collaborative process that involved many partners: teaching faculty, librarians, library staff, instructional designers, instructional technicians
- Content created by subject experts (librarians, library staff, geographers)
- Course instructors given frequent opportunity to provide feedback on progress
- Challenges: Short timeline, shifting goals, instructor buy-in, staff shortages

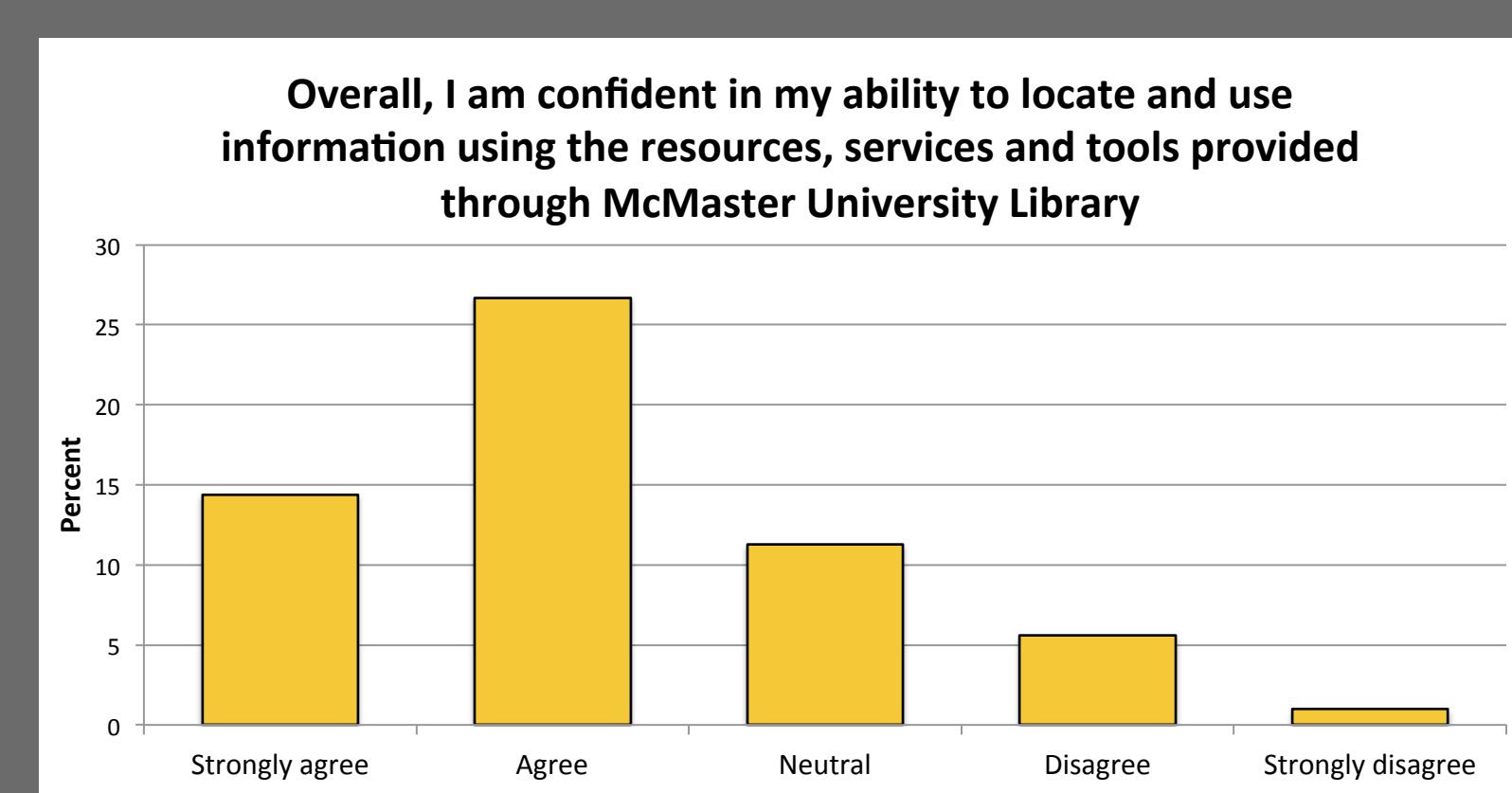
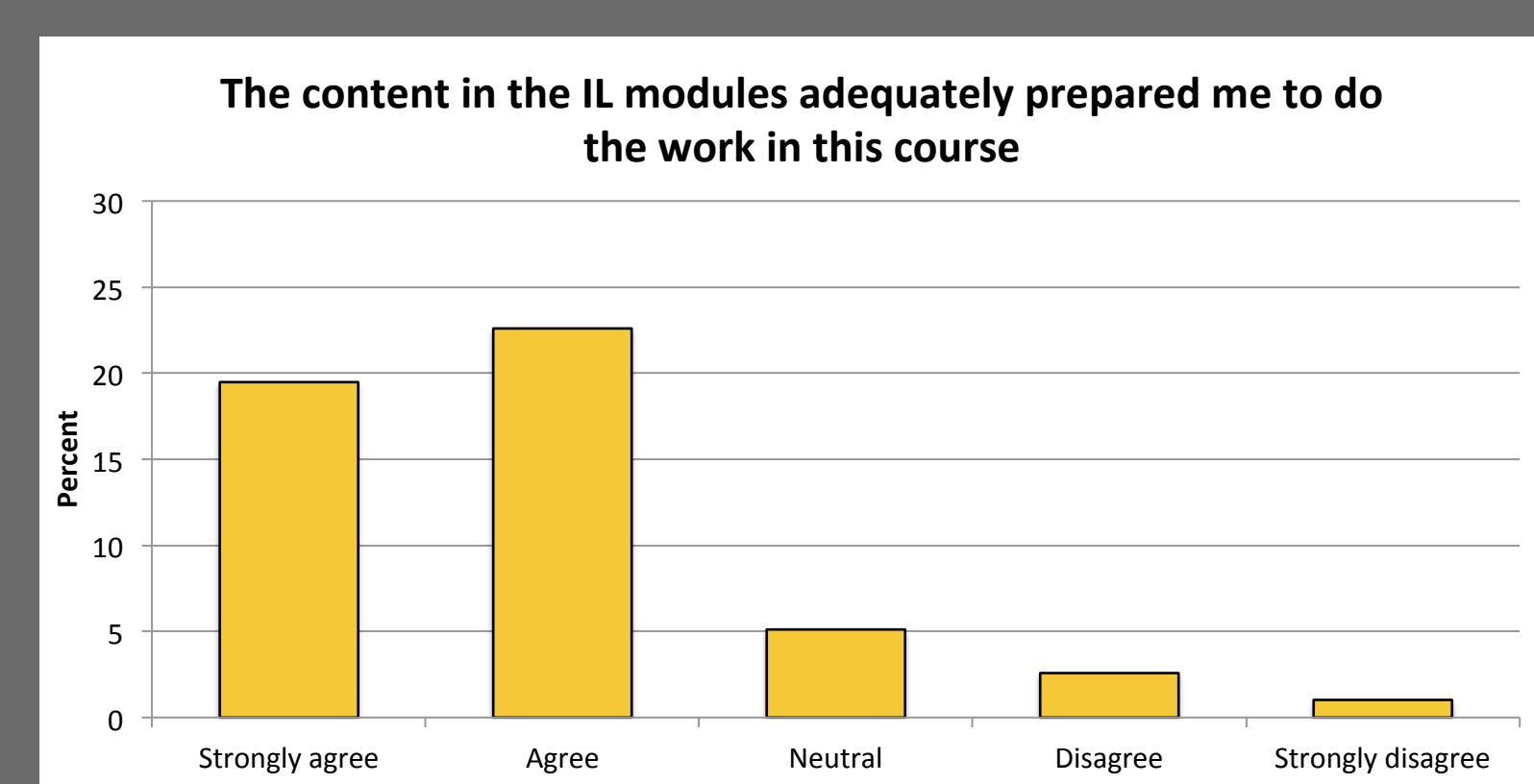
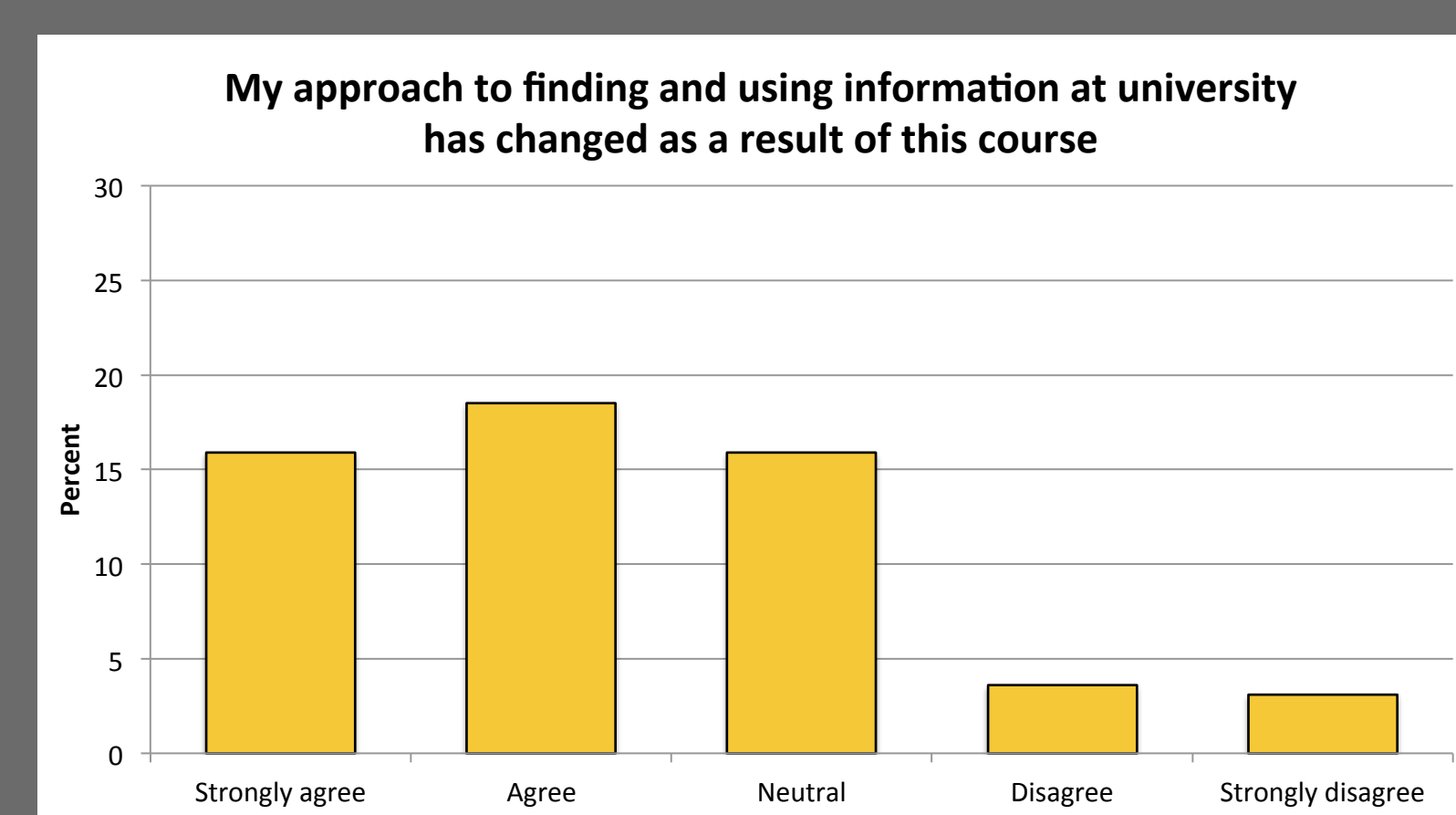
View tutorials at library.mcmaster.ca/online-tutorials

Assessment Methods

- Feedback was obtained by two methods: online survey of students in pilot courses and focus groups with course instructors and instructional assistants
- Collected in Dec. 2011, after one term using the modules
- Student survey: N=145; response rate: ~3%
- Focus groups: Included 4 of the 5 participating courses

Results

Selected Student Survey Responses



Themes from Student Comments

- Interactivity important
- Desire for shorter modules
- Consider pace, concision during creation

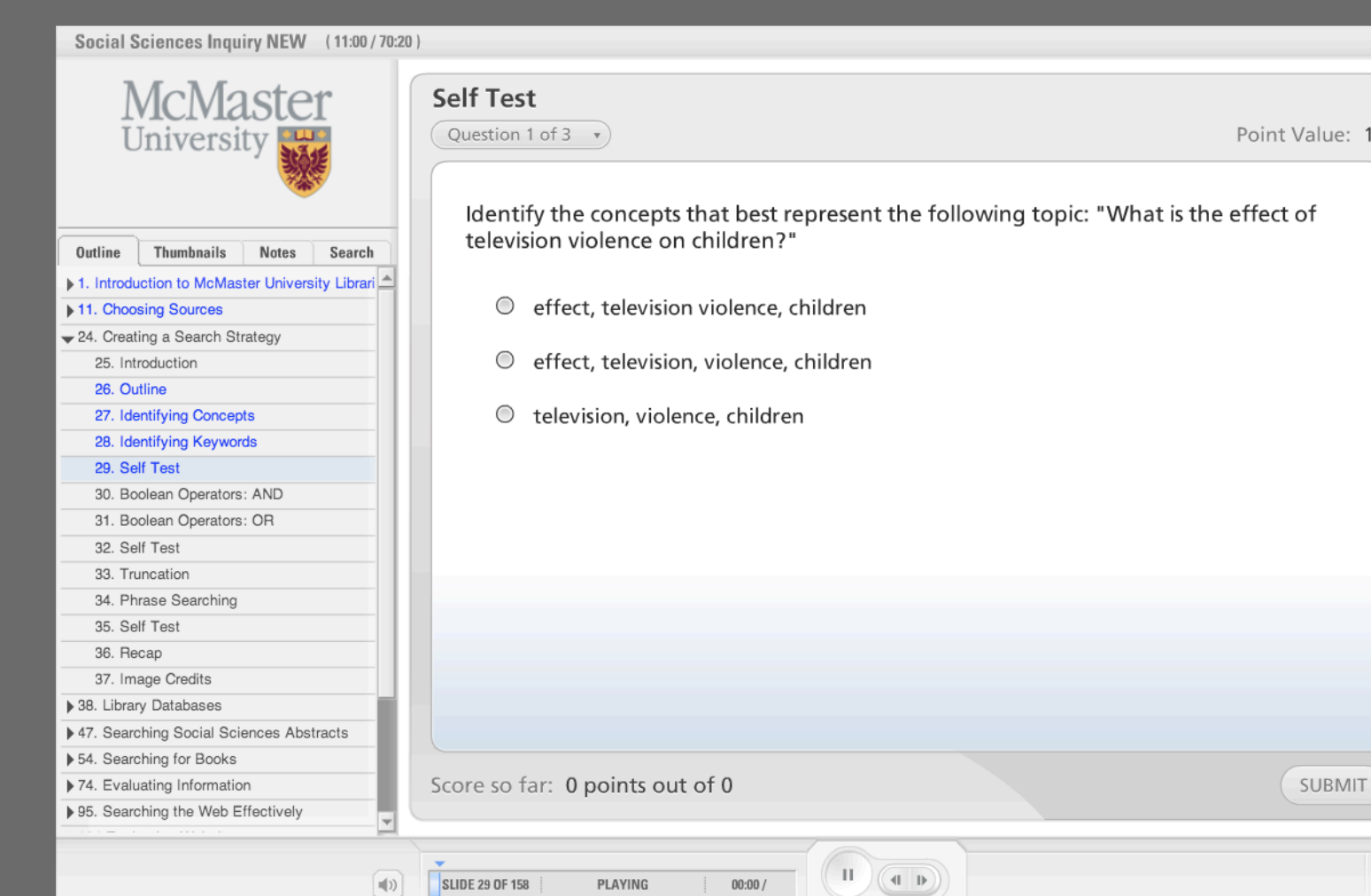
Themes from Focus Groups

- Instructors want to customize which topics they use for their courses; keep different topics separate
- Recognition that offering online tutorials not 'enough'; they need to be supported in the course
- Work with course instructors to create, improve, revise and edit content
- Involvement of librarians in-class is still valued
- Put modules in a public, accessible location
- Interest in modules for more advanced topics

- Self-test questions should be challenging
- Avoid monotone delivery
- Value self paced learning, ability to move around modules

Project Outcomes

- PowerPoint and narration combined to create online tutorials in Captivate
- Two course-specific IL tutorials created, covering topics that included: choosing sources, library databases, finding books, evaluating sources, citing and more
- One geospatial/map skills tutorial created
- Tutorials placed in LMS for each course



Conclusions

- Recognition that with tight budgets and reduced staff, online learning will continue to be of increased importance; will require updating and improvements
- Benefits to efficiency by partnering with campus teaching and learning support
- Students generally positive toward online learning, but not overwhelmingly so
- Faculty willing to experiment, but cautious about benefits to learning/course

References

- EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research (ECAR). (2004). Blended Learning. *ECAR Research Bulletin*, p. 3
- Twigg, C. A. (2003). Improving learning and reducing costs: New models for online learning. *Educause Review* (Sept/Oct), p. 33.

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