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First-Year Student Research Skills: Challenges, Myths, and Solutions

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Created at the Wright State University Libraries, 2014.
These materials were designed to be used with Wright State University first-year students or faculty of first-year students to improve research skills.

Project Team:
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First-Year Student Research Skills

Challenges, Myths, and Solutions

Big Challenge for First-Year Students

Agenda:

- ✓ **Project Information Literacy overview**
- ✓ **Research challenges of first-year students**
- ✓ **PIL results and WSU student results**
- ✓ **How we can help**

PROJECT Information Literacy

Information School UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Learning the Ropes

How Freshmen Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College

Alison J. Head, Ph.D.

December 5, 2013

I'm
overwhelmed!

But,
I'm excited!

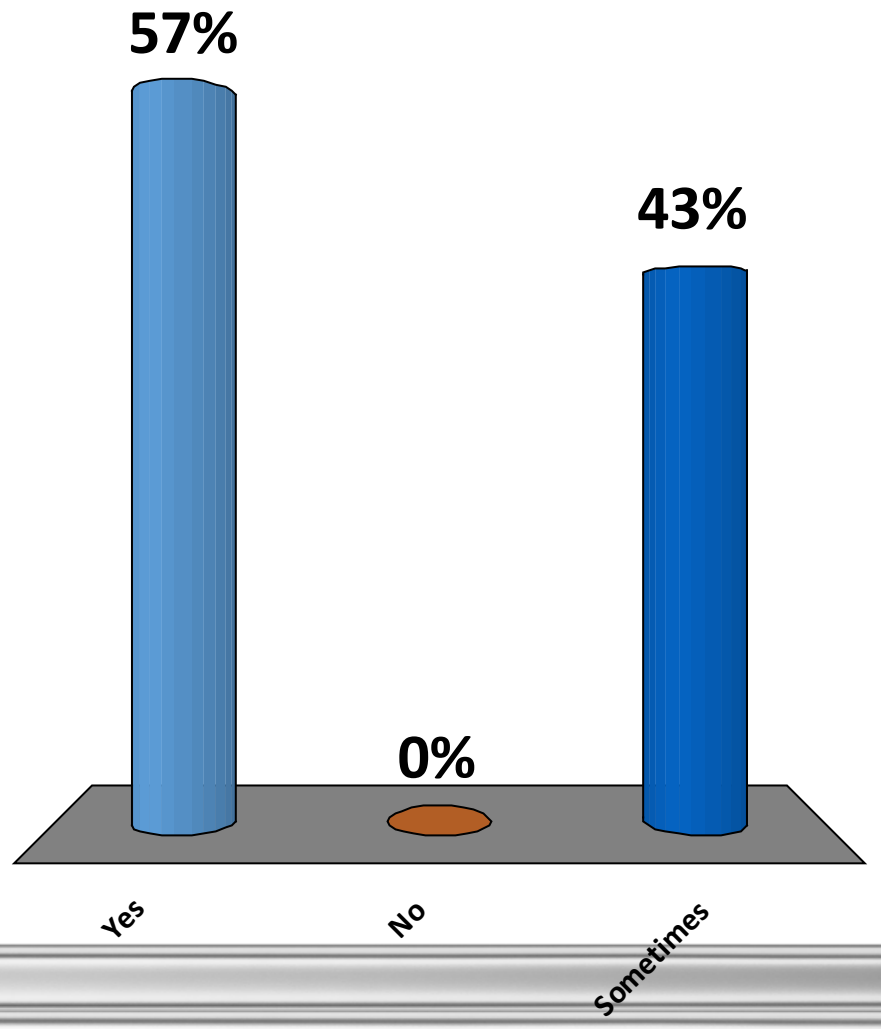
Do I have enough information?

What kind of sources do I need?

What's APA?

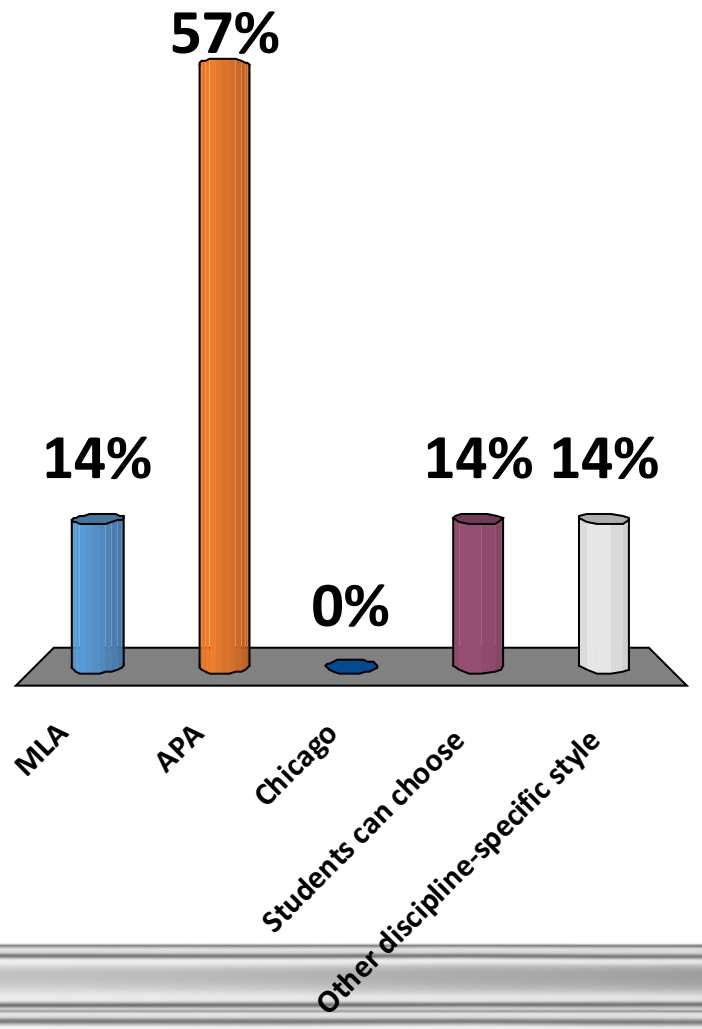
I find students' lack of research experience frustrating

A. Yes
B. No
C. Sometimes

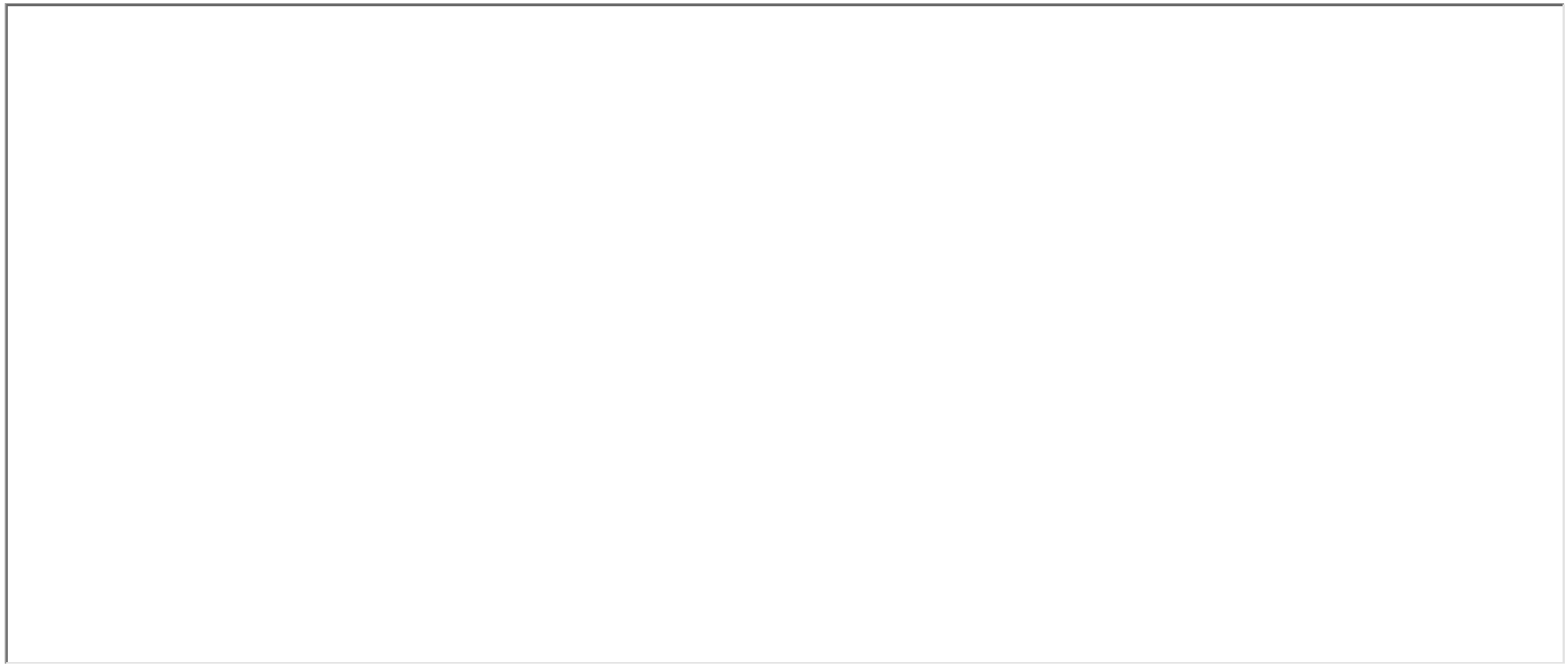


I require this citation style most often

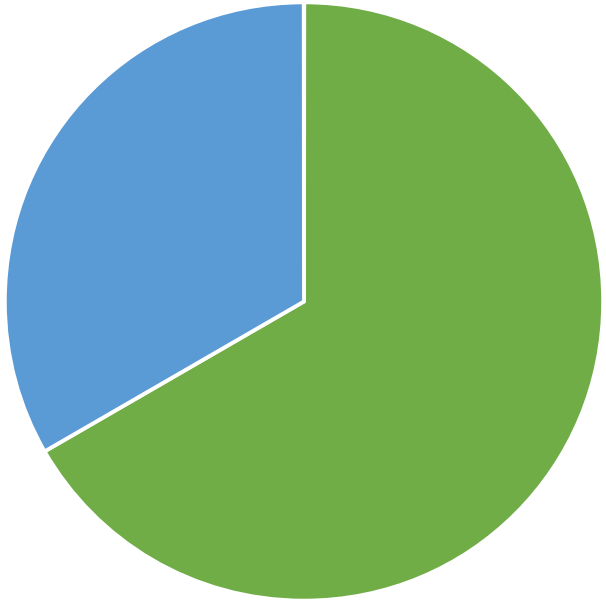
A. MLA
B. APA
C. Chicago
D. Students can choose
E. Other discipline-specific style



I require the following sources:



1/3 of Students are Uncertain about Faculty Expectations



Freshman Myths

5 recurring misconceptions about college level research process

Myth #1

I’m independent.
It’s unacceptable to ask for help.

Myth #2

Everything's online;
I don't need to go to the library.

Myth #3

Librarians are only for students who get stuck.

Myth #4

The database the librarian recommended is the only source I should use.

Myth #5

Dusty old books,
nothing relevant to my research!

Major Findings

And solutions!

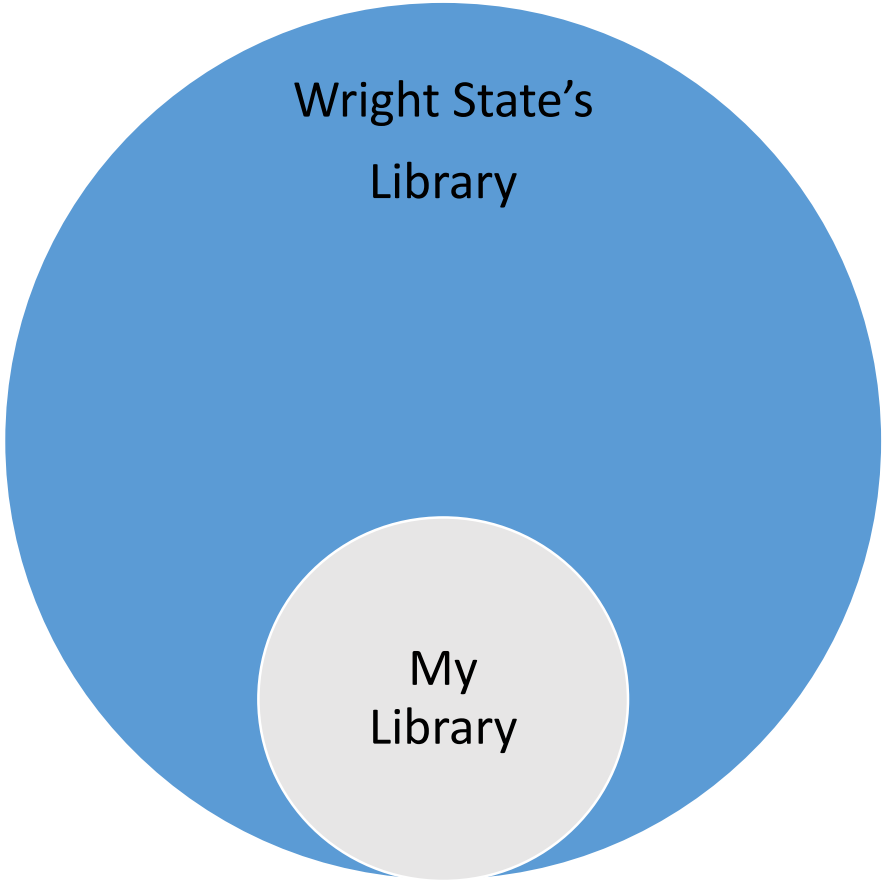
Wow, this library
is huge!

9 times more books

10 times more computers

20 times more librarians

21 times more databases



Struggles of First-Year Students

- ✓ Defining/selecting a topic
- ✓ Constructing searches
- ✓ Locating relevant sources
- ✓ Making sense of it all

PIL Study – Students' Responses:

What challenges do you face when finding and using information?

37% could not define and select a topic

74% struggled to construct searches

57% could not locate relevant sources

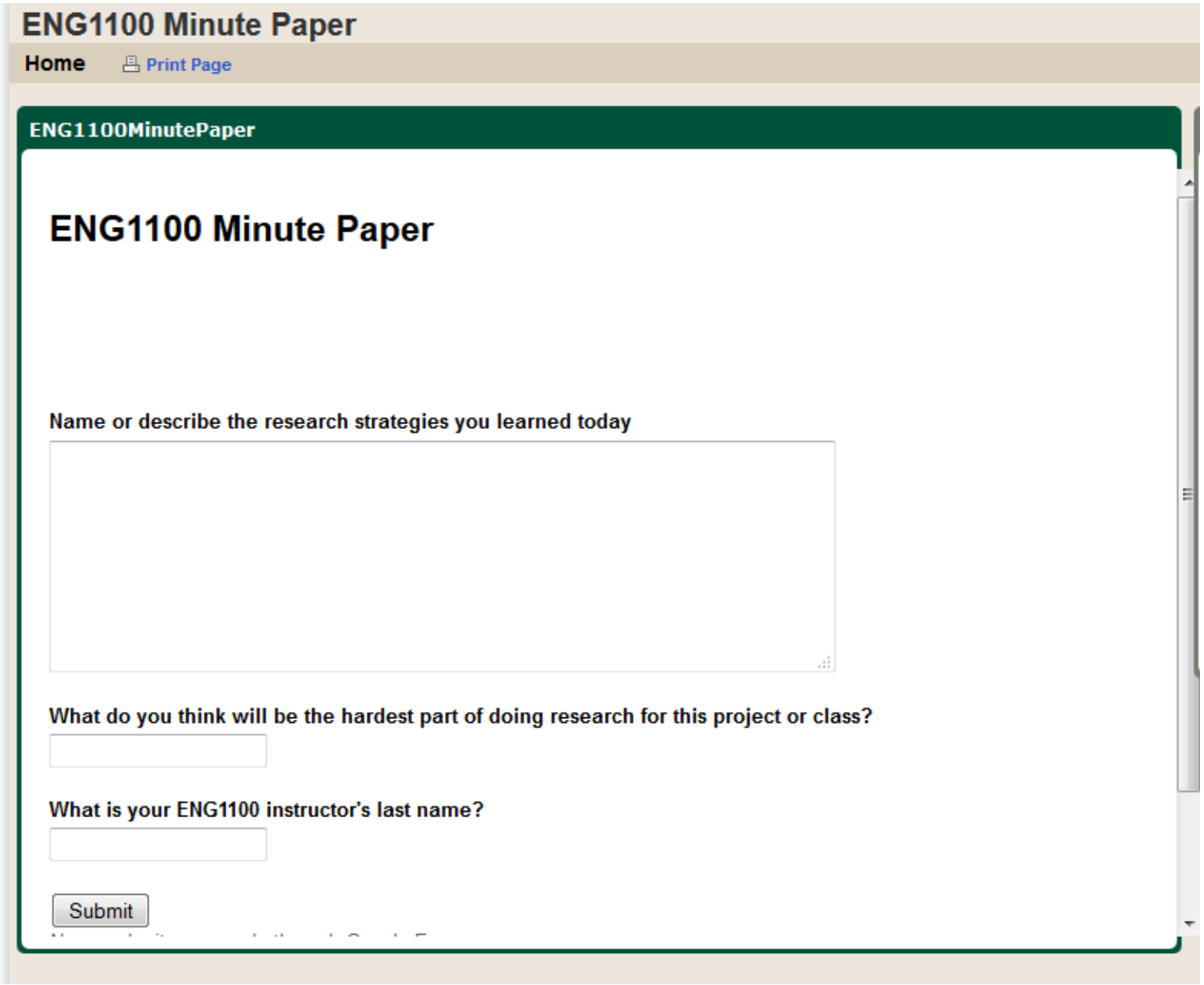
43% struggled to make sense of sources they found

ENG1100 Learning Objectives

- Constructing & implementing effective search strategies
- Identifying keywords, synonyms and related terms
- Exploring a general information source to increase familiarity with a topic

What did you learn?

What will be the hardest part?



WSU ENG1100 Assessment Results:

What did you learn today?

81% construct and implement effective search strategies

67% identify keywords, synonyms, and related terms

WSU ENG1100 Assessment Results:

What will be the hardest part?

14% define and select a topic

5% constructing searches

2% locate relevant sources

23% struggle to make sense of sources they found

WSU ENG1100 Assessment Results:

46%

ENG1100 classes with library visit

14% define and select a topic

5% constructing searches

2% locate relevant sources

23% struggle to make sense of sources they found

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ASK A LIBRARIAN

Ask a Librarian

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- » Chat With Us
- » Text or Call Us
- » Meet with Us
  - » In Person
  - » Virtually
- » Research Quick Start
- » Chat Privacy Policy

Ask A Librarian

Email Us

Meet In Person

Meet Virtually

askwsulibrary

Type here to chat. Press ENTER to send.

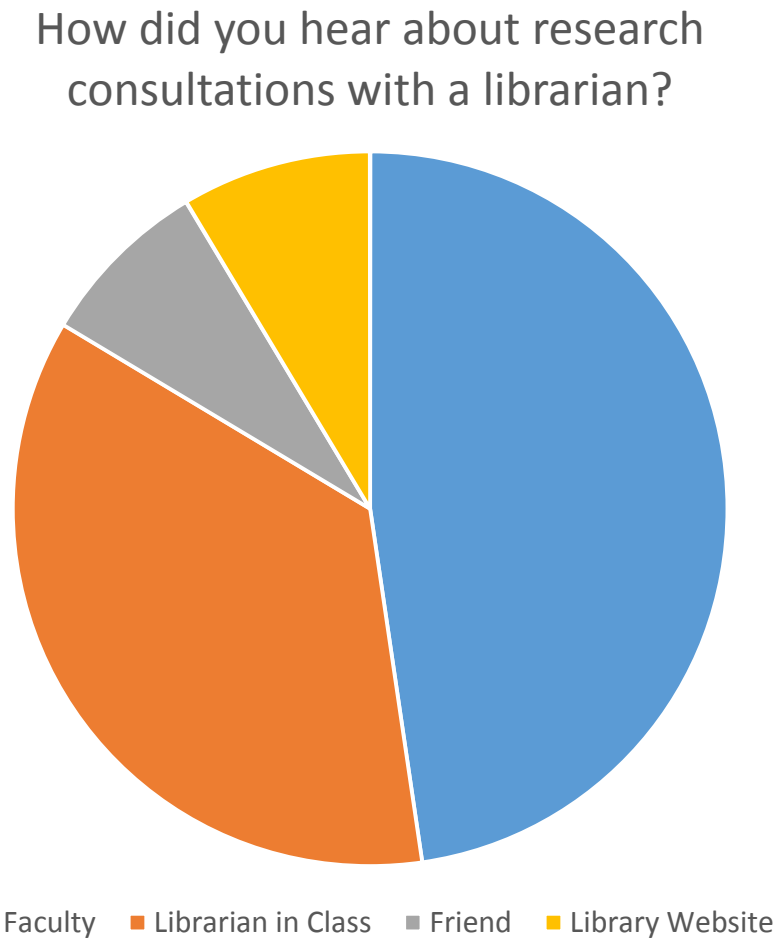
Instant Message

Text or Call

Self-Help Research Guides

Faculty Members are Role Models

700 appointments last year



Research Appointment with Librarian Feedback

The assistance I received fulfilled my needs

I learned research skills and techniques I can use later

I am likely to use the library in the future

Research Appointment with Librarian Feedback

99% The assistance I received fulfilled my needs

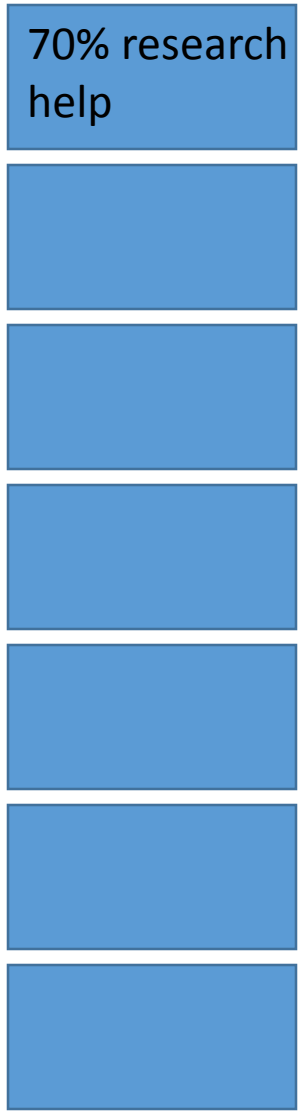
98% I learned research skills and techniques I can use later

99% I am likely to use the library in future

Students who use the library are more successful!

Students with higher GPAs had received more research assistance from librarians

GPA 3.0 or Lower



GPA 3.5 or Higher

Resetting Expectations

"The cognitive skills needed for scholarly inquiry are very different than finding ready-made answers using a Google search."

How to get rid of those crappy research papers

~~How to get rid of those crappy research papers~~

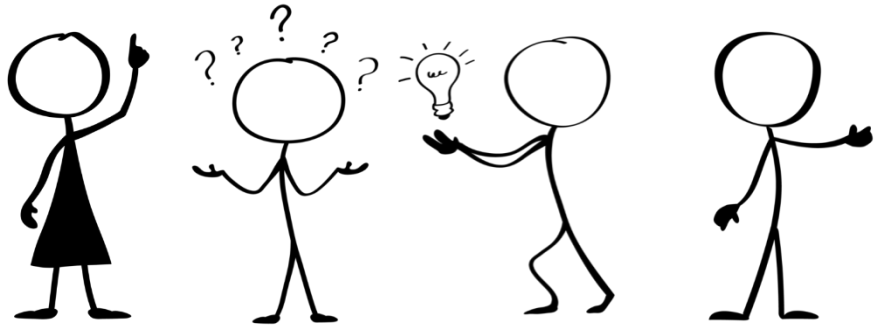
Research Toolkit

- 8 workshops
- Interactive
- Assessment
- Certificates and records of attendance
- More information on our website

Help Improve First-Year Student Research

- ✓ Invite a librarian for instruction
- ✓ Recommend library workshops
- ✓ Continue dialogue with us

Thank You!



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