

ELEVATING IMPACT OF LIBRARY RESEARCH AND INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report submitted to the Faculty of
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WPI

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Abstract

This project took a mixed methods approach to assessing the usage of research and instructional services at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Through the collection of surveys and the administration of focus groups, we identified obstacles and impediments to student engagement. Using this information, we created recommendations aimed at helping Gordon Library's Research and Instructional team improve its outreach to students and faculty and at making information literacy a more central learning objective across campus. The areas of improvement include Summon, course integration, advertising, and other workshops.

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We would like to thank all of the individuals that have dedicated their time, effort and assistance for this project. We would especially like to thank Professor Joseph Cullon for being our advisor and for all of his assistance he provided during the course of our project. We would also like to thank Laura Robinson for being our sponsor and for all of the insight and guidance she provided throughout the project. Additionally, we would like to thank Paige Neumann, Jessica O'Toole, Rebecca Ziino, Deborah Bockus, and Jessica Colati for their assistance throughout the duration of our project. Finally, we would like to thank all of the students who participated in our focus groups and surveys. Without the help, time, and effort of these individuals this project would not have been possible.

1. Introduction

The ability to gather useful information is critical to success in academics and within the workforce. All disciplines are required to obtain various sources and studies, and be able to determine whether or not those materials are useful, legitimate, and dependable. However, quality information can be difficult to find in the vastness of the internet. It is necessary to develop research skills throughout an academic career and beyond in order to effectively find reliable and pertinent sources in an ever evolving digital world. In STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) research is entirely different from that in the humanities. Though like in humanities, STEM has many fields and disciplines that share little common literature. This means that research takes many forms, not only in subject matter, but in how you go about finding the information. While a good amount of information literacy skills are transferable across fields of study, each may benefit from tailor approaches. As a result, acquisition of information literacy skills, like writing and oral communication, need to be continuously honed as students move across the WPI curriculum. Gordon Library's Research and Instruction can play a vital role in the development of a sophisticated and information literate student body.

Our goal is to help Gordon Library's Research and Instruction team improve its outreach to students and faculty as to make information literacy instruction a more central learning outcome across campus. To achieve this goal, we sought to learn why some students utilize the information literacy resources offered by the library and why others do not. We wanted to understand what types of students do not use the library's instructional services, determine why these students do not use them, and use our findings to create future plans and recommendations so the library can increase their usage and produce higher levels of information literacy across

campus. We determined what types of students do not use these instructional services through a short survey administered through social media, email and paper. Next, we selected individuals from those groups to participate in focus groups. In these focus groups we asked more in-depth questions to ascertain “the why” behind the lack of usage or the appeal of certain resources. This report makes many recommendations to the library in order to increase student engagement with the library’s information literacy resources. In addition, we made suggestions to improve the quality of these resources. This will allow the librarians to better reach the groups that they are not currently reaching.

This research is critical to the improvement of students’ information literacy skills. It will help librarians target specific groups of students in certain ways to better teach and advise them. By better understanding the reasons why students do not use the library’s information resources, we can find ways to better support their needs. This, in turn, will improve attainment of information outcomes across campus.

1.1 Objectives

Despite the abundance of information literacy resources offered by the library, there are students who do not take advantage of them. We sought to find why some students do not utilize available information resources, while others do. To achieve this goal, we pursued the following objectives during the course of our project:

- Conducted and analyzed a survey to assess which types of students use the library’s current information literacy resources;
- Orchestrated focus groups to determine why students do or do not use the library’s information literacy resources and how they understand information literacy;

- Created a set of recommendations for the George C. Gordon Library to better support the WPI student body's information literacy needs.

These recommendations would help improve information literacy and research skills across campus.

2. Background

Information literacy is the set of abilities that allows individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information," (Information, 2004). Information literacy is becoming increasingly important in an environment of rapid technological progress. Due to the increasing complexity of the information landscape, people are faced with broad and abundant information choices. Information is available through outlets such as: libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media and the internet. The problem is that the information comes to individuals in unfiltered formats raising questions about its authenticity, validity, reliability, and bias. This is especially relevant with internet sources, where the legitimacy of the information is not easily intuitively confirmed.

The Gordon Library worked to implement the Information Literacy Standards. These standards were the initial method for defining learning outcomes in information literacy, as defined by the American Library Association (ALA) (Information, 2004). Recently, the ALA introduced the Framework for Information Literacy (Framework, 2015). Now, the library is transitioning from the older Standards to the more modern Framework.

2.1 Information Literacy Framework

The Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education rests upon the belief that information literacy will realize its potential only through a rich, complex set of abilities. It is called a framework because it is based on a cluster of interconnected core principles not measureable standards. The framework substitutes strict learning outcomes with broad concepts, allowing for interpretation through implementation in a variety of settings. The core of this framework is a conceptual understanding that organizes many different concepts and ideas about

information, research, and scholarship into a coherent form (Framework, 2015). The framework is listed in detail below.

2.1.1 Authority Is Constructed and Contextual

“Information resources reflect their creators’ expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required,” (Framework, 2015).

2.1.2 Information Creation as a Process

“Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences,” (Framework, 2015).

2.1.3 Information Has Value

“Information possesses several dimensions of value, including as a commodity, as a means of education, as a means to influence, and as a means of negotiating and understanding the world. Legal and socioeconomic interests influence information production and dissemination,” (Framework, 2015).

2.1.4 Research as Inquiry

“Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field,” (Framework, 2015).

2.1.5 Scholarship as Conversation

“Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations,” (Framework, 2015).

2.1.6 Searching as Strategic Exploration

“Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops,” (Framework, 2015).

2.1.7 Connections to the WPI Plan

These frameworks are important for WPI students because they provide a basis for assessing information literacy skills. This connects with the WPI Plan in that it allows for interpretation across disciplines.

2.2 WPI’s Current Information Literacy Resources

Currently, the Gordon Library has a variety of resources to assist students and faculty in their information literacy needs. For example, the Gordon Library’s website has a list of trusted databases for research, sorted by subject. The library also offers individual or team consultations with research librarians, as well as course integrated sessions, where research librarians go through the researching process. Lastly, the Gordon library hosts a biannual library services and vendor fair for faculty, where the ATC/Library Liaison Program, with librarians and instructional technologists, partner to educate and inform faculty on information literacy (Worcester, 2011). All of these resources are designed to improve the information literacy skills of the WPI student body, as well as WPI faculty.

2.2.1 WPI's Library Practices and Anticipated Implementations

The following tables express the library's current practices and anticipated implementations.

Table 1: Past and Current Library Practices

Past and Current Library Practices		
	General	Research and Instruction
New Student Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Lightning Tours" (roughly 5 minute tours through library, whose short time aims to entice more students to walk through) • Sessions explaining what the library offers • Tables scattered around library, called "beacons", offering prizes • Community Advisor Training on Library Services 	Note: All things in "General" incorporate Research and Instruction
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Services makes signs for hours and where to study • Dean controls floor signs, like study spaces 	None
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Communications puts things on Facebook, Twitter, newsletters, etc. • "Gordon on the Go" (a program where library staff go to the Campus Center and offer books and information about the archives in the library) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Communications puts things on Facebook, Twitter, newsletters, etc.

Note: Table Assembled through Interviews with Jessica Colati, Assistant Director for Curation, Preservation, and Archives, Deborah Bockus, Assistant Director for Access Services, and Rebecca Ziino, Research and Instruction Librarian

Table 2: Library's Anticipated Implementations in AY 2016-2017

Anticipated Implementations in AY 2016-2017		
	General	Research and Instruction
New Student Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to compete with other larger organizations during NSO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find ways to compete with other larger organizations during NSO • Find ways to ensure students retain the information
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a consistent visual brand • Create more signage, and use better, more eye-catching advertising and signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness of Research and Instructional Services through signs
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create better ways to promote workshops • Add marketing skills to job descriptions for new positions in order to remedy the fact that the Library has no marketing team • Use Twitter more effectively, by advertising events and offerings in advance and not listing the hours the library is open 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate R&I into other workshops and activities offered on campus, such as Writing Workshops • Integrate a Research Librarian into "Gordon on the Go"

Note: Table Assembled through Interviews with Jessica Colati, Assistant Director for Curation, Preservation, and Archives, Deborah Bockus, Assistant Director for Access Services, and Rebecca Ziino, Research and Instruction Librarian

2.3 Previous Studies on Library Research and Instruction Service Non-Users

In order to better help the library, it is important to first look at previous studies on similar topics. In the study: "Who Is Not Using the Library? A Comparison of Undergraduate Academic Disciplines and Library Use" by Laurie Bridges, research is done on the assumption that those in liberal arts disciplines are more likely to use the library than science and engineering. The study found that engineering students were less likely to use the library's

virtual resources compared to liberal arts students. When comparing physical library use, she found that engineering majors were engaged in information-seeking behaviors less than social science majors. However, the frequency of visits to the library between the two disciplines did not show a statistically significant difference. When the engineering students were asked where they conduct online research for assignments, the received responses were: Google, the library, and a department building on campus. In the study there were also some anomalies. At the Washington State University Engineering Library, after the library made online journal articles available, the use of print materials actually increased. When asked about their experiences with library services, most faculty and staff were not aware of the services and did not know that library faculty would visit their classroom to teach information literacy skills. In the words of one faculty member, “I may be a particularly poorly informed faculty member about what kinds of, you know, information retrieval is available through the library, I may be a bad example. But it seems to me that [sigh] perhaps that says the library is not doing a good enough job making it clear to faculty members what kinds of resources are available,” (Bridges, 2008). This study is relevant to us because we are an engineering school. Therefore, the students of interest in this study comprise most of the students at WPI.

At the University of Rochester, Nancy Fried Foster and Susan Gibbons did a study called “Studying Students,” where they tried to figure out what steps students took to do research projects. They asked many students what steps they took to do research for their projects in order to see how students approach the task. One question asked, “Did you think of talking with a librarian?” (Foster, 2007). Of the students asked, 79% had not approached a librarian for help with their project, even if they had asked one in the past. “From these responses we can see that once students have a research paper assigned they do not head straight to the reference desk for

help. In fact, several in our sample lacked a clear understanding of the ways a librarian can assist them. Some students identified librarians only with print and with locating materials in the library collection,” (Foster, 2007). The majority of the students interviewed were not aware of how the librarians could help them do their research. This relates to our study because we are seeking to build upon Foster and Gibbins findings.

Our study will pursue the methodologies of these previous studies; in addition, we will seek to further their findings and connect them to the unique WPI setting.

3. Methodology

To understand why some students do not take full advantage of Gordon Library's Research and Instruction Services, this project undertook both a survey of a representative sample of the student body and a series of focus groups with students identified through the survey. The goal was to learn more about what prevents students from utilizing the Library's current research resources, including interactions with research librarians, database subscriptions, online resources, and the physical book collection.

3.1 Surveys

The survey collected information in three areas. First, it asked demographic questions. Second, the survey sought information about how respondents used library resources and their opinion of library services. Finally, the survey asked respondents if they would be willing to participate in further information collection, such as focus groups.

3.1.1 Sample Size

For effective survey results the entire population must be surveyed. In most cases, surveying the entire population is difficult or impossible, so you seek to survey a sample of the population. There are many factors that go into determining a statistically appropriate sample size; however, the main parameters are the total population size, allowed margin of error, confidence level in the results, and the standard of deviation. The confidence level has a Z-score attached to it, which is a value determined depending on the percentage of confidence you have. For our survey, we decided on a 95% confidence level (Z-score of 1.96), margin of error of 5%, total population size of 4100, and a standard of deviation of 0.5. This calculation recommended a minimum sample size of 352. As a result, we needed to collect at least 352 survey responses (Smith, 2013). We collected 491 responses, far exceeding the necessary amount.

3.1.2 Strategies for Distribution and Collection

To distribute the surveys, we used a combination of online and in-person solicitations. First, we went to the campus center and handed out physical copies of the surveys to people. Later, we entered the data into Qualtrics. Using physical copies instead of walking around with laptops or tablets allowed us survey more people simultaneously. We spent an hour on the main floor of the campus center from 11AM to 12PM and handed out copies to people sitting at tables and in line for Dunkin Donuts. From 12PM to 1PM, we handed out copies to people on the ground floor while students were having lunch. Personal solicitation with paper surveys yielded 200 responses. Aside from the campus center, we went to the library on a Friday evening for an hour, using the same physical copy method. This method yielded another 50 responses.

Second, we used social media and email to distribute surveys. These solicitations were posted on private groups and class forums as well as were sent out in emails to various groups, such as athletics teams and student organizations. Through electronic solicitations, students were able to fill out the survey on directly on Qualtrics.

After analyzing the first 400 responses, we noticed that responses were freshman were lower than for upper-class people, so we targeted first years at Morgan Dining Hall in the freshman dormitory. Using paper surveys, we solicited students for an hour yielding 40 responses of which 90% were freshman.

3.1.3 Survey Instrument

In order to create the survey, we used Qualtrics software. Qualtrics allowed us to analyze and cross-reference specific data points. The survey asked questions on the respondent's demographic profile, their use of library resources, their opinion of those resources and their willingness to participate in a focus group. For demographic data, the survey queried about

major, class year, what projects have been completed, and humanities depth in order to build a view of a real student that goes to WPI. The demographic data allowed the formulation of group profiles, so we could pinpoint similarities between cohorts and their usage of the library's information resources. The data collected from the surveys helped us and can help the library see what types of students do and do not use the resources and helped us to plan on how to seek out the students who do not. We surveyed all types of students, with no specific focus.

3.2 Focus Groups

After we conducted the surveys, we put together focus groups to develop a greater understanding of how students take advantage (or do not take advantage) of Gordon Library's Research and Instruction Services. As a part of the survey, the participants were able to sign up to be considered for a focus group to be conducted shortly after the conclusion of the survey. The focus groups allowed us to ask more specific questions and solicit opinions. We used the focus groups to obtain specific details and generate discussion on the topic of information literacy resources. By asking more detailed questions we were able to acquire very specific answers and reasoning from the participants. The goals of the focus groups were to figure out exactly why the participants do or do not use the library's resources, and to discuss ways to get more people to use them, which we accomplished. To incentivize participation in the focus groups, we compensated the focus group participants in gift certificates.

In order to gather meaningful information from the focus groups, we created specific groupings. One group was comprised of avid users of the library's information literacy resources. They used them often and loved them. The other group was comprised of those who weren't very fond of the resources or did not know much about them. The third group was comprised of a mixture of the first two groups. We wanted to have many focus groups with

varied common characteristics, but in order to make time for both the focus groups and data analytics, we limited the amount to three focus groups in total, with around five members per focus group.

Once we received the data from focus groups and had a chance to analyze it, we looked to show further trends from the survey's results or to find new trends entirely. We were able to determine possibilities for why some students do and do not use the library's information resources. Knowing just who does and does not use them is useful, but knowing exactly why helps us find ways to change it, in the form of recommendations. After finding the trends in the surveys, we saw how the data collected in the focus groups was very similar. The surveys are a good tool to find out what student types use specific resources, and the focus groups allowed us to figure out specifically why these students do and do not use them.

4. Results

This section will provide information regarding the student body and their use of the Gordon Library’s Research and Instructional Services. It will include the results from our survey and focus groups.

4.1 Survey

After distributing the surveys and collecting responses, we totaled 477 survey participants. The results are shown in the following charts.

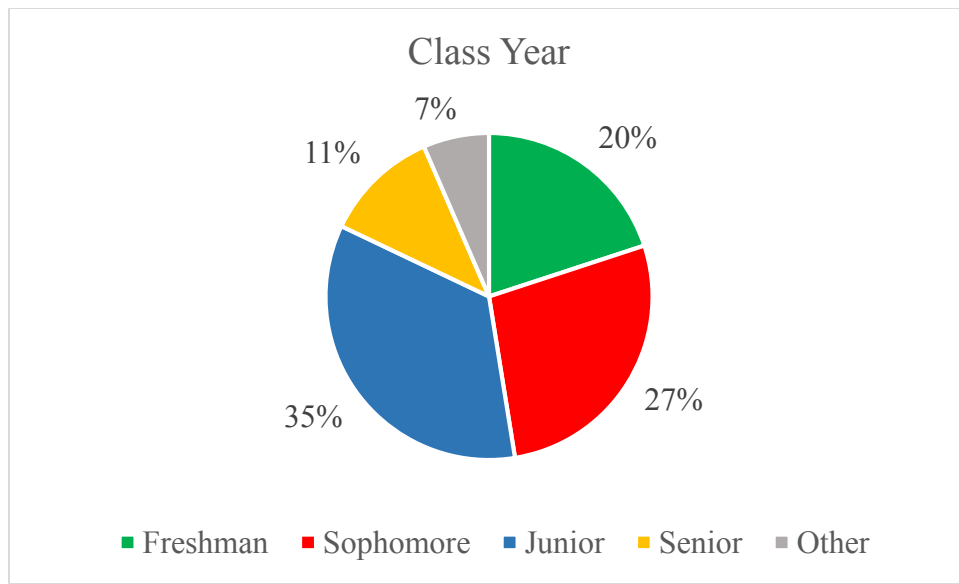


Figure 1: Percentage of survey respondents in each class year

Note: The “Other” category includes both Mass Academy students and Graduate students.

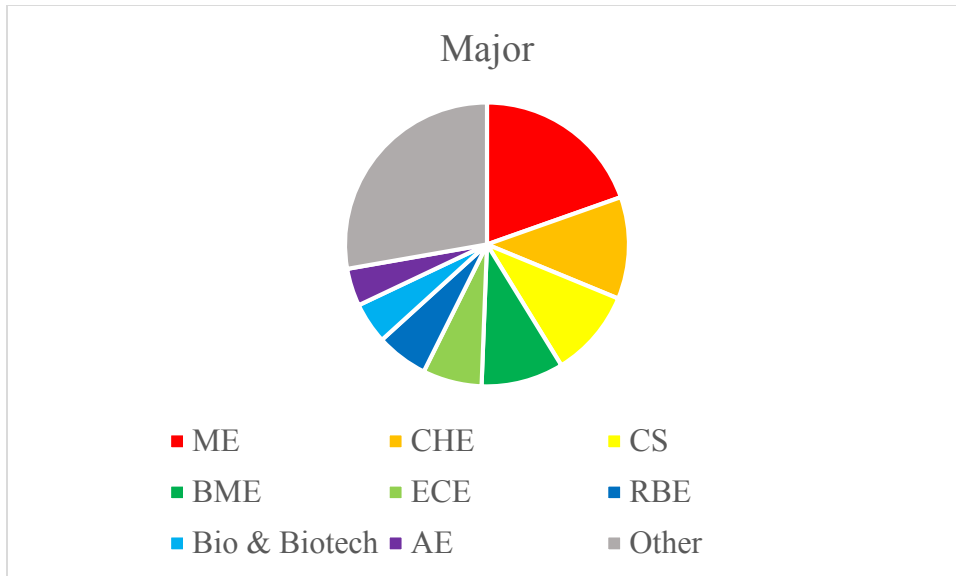


Figure 2: Percentage of survey respondents in each major

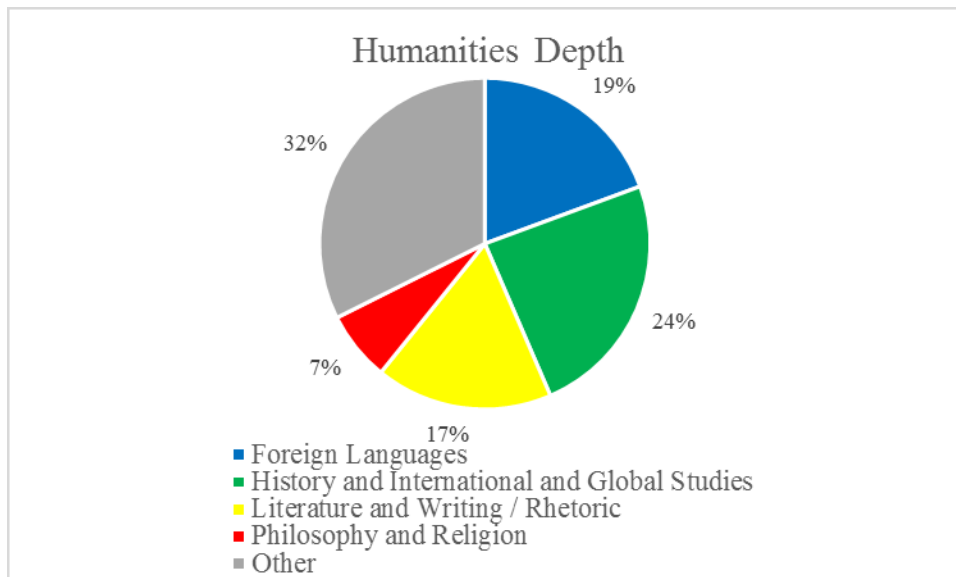


Figure 3: Percentage of survey respondents in each humanities and arts depth

Note: The "Other" category includes Art/Art History, Drama/Theatre, Music, and Other.

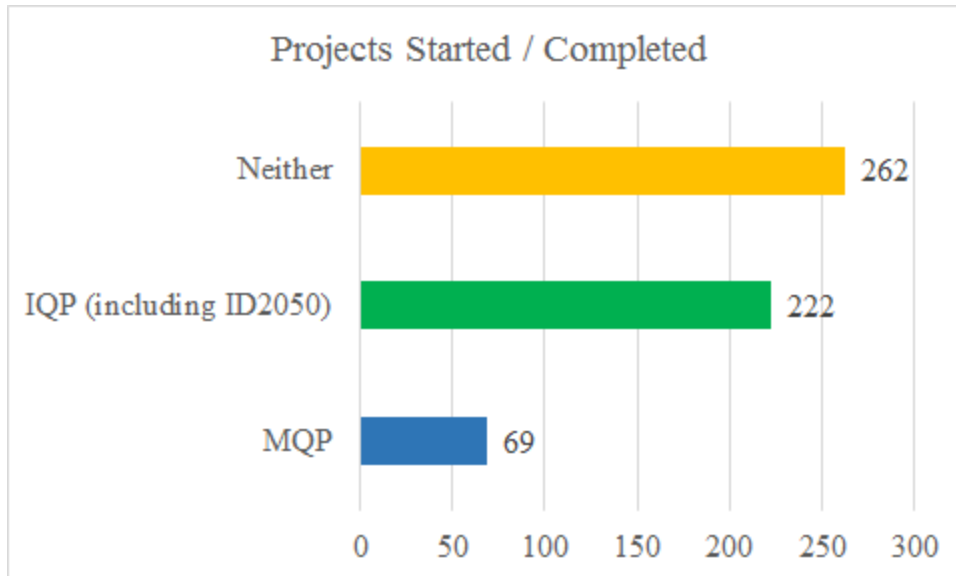


Figure 4: Amount of survey respondents who have completed/were in the process of completing IQP (including ID2050) and/or MQP

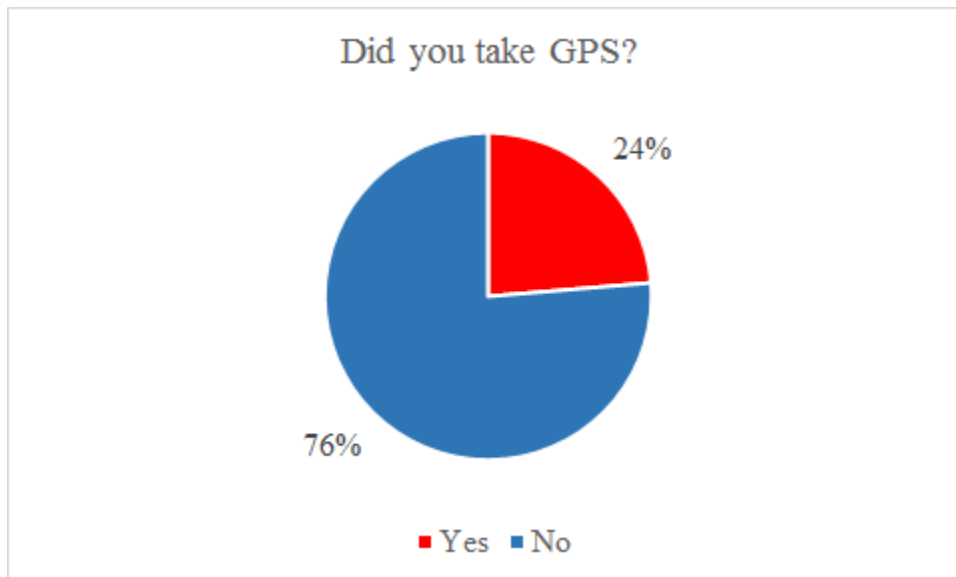


Figure 5: Amount of survey respondents who have taken GPS

Figures one through five seem representative of the entire Worcester Polytechnic Institute student body, as referenced in the WPI Fact Book (WPI). As a result, we can conclude that our sample is a representative sample and we can extrapolate our conclusions regarding this survey to the entire WPI student body.

After gathering demographic data, we asked questions regarding usage of the library's information resources, specifically Research Librarian consultations, usage of the library's research databases, and course integrated sessions. For the course integrated sessions, we had the participants state whether the session was in GPS, IQP, MQP, and/or Humanities and Arts requirement. We also asked about the helpfulness and general advertisement of these resources.

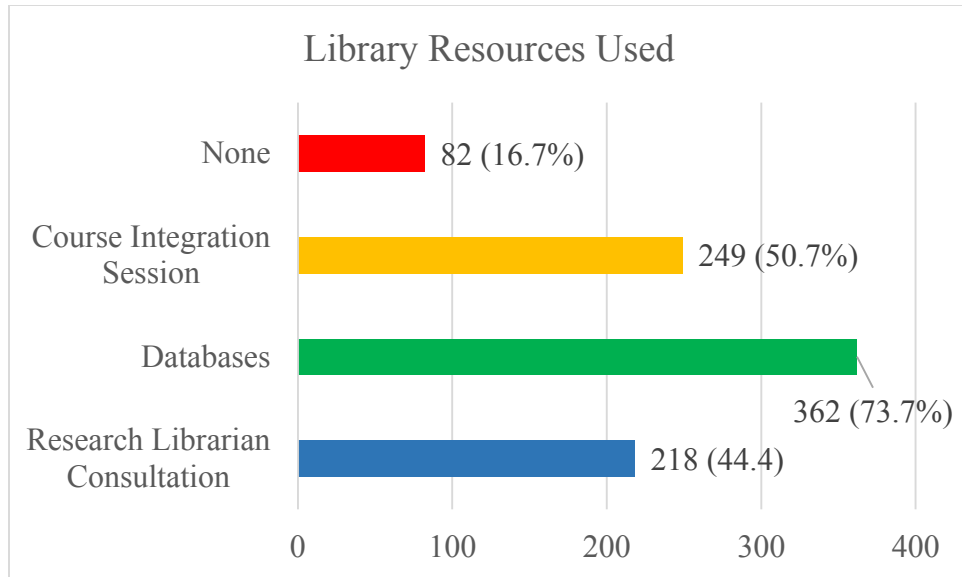


Figure 6: Survey respondents' usage of library information resources by type

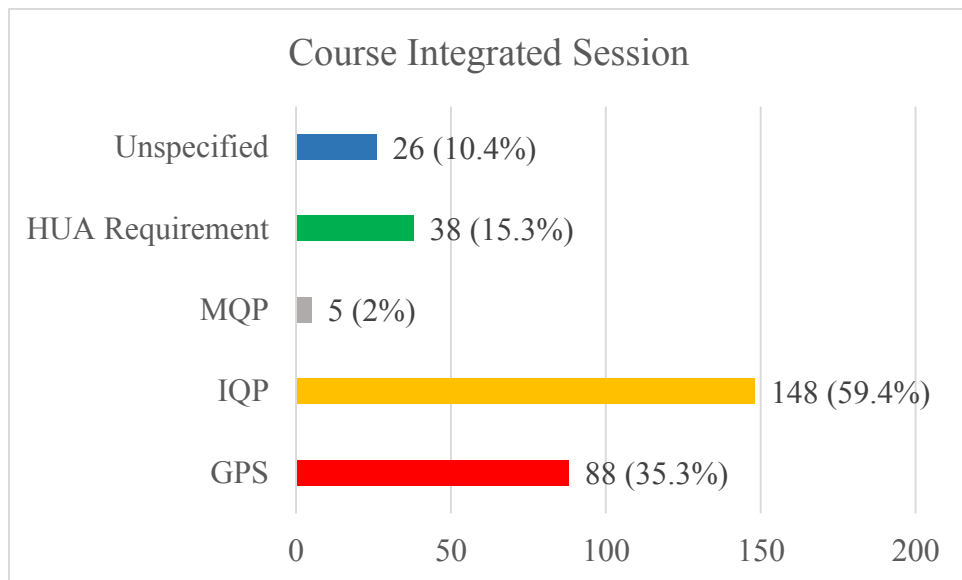


Figure 7: Survey respondents' usage of course integrated session by requirement

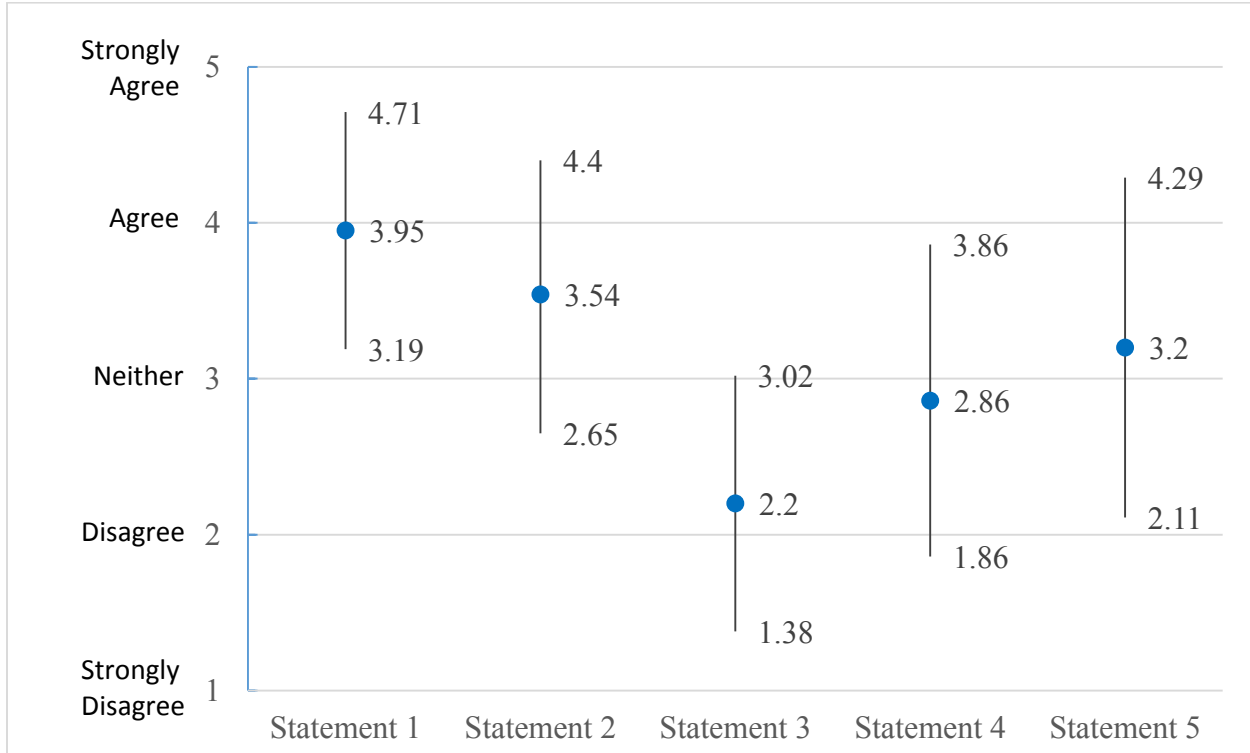


Figure 8: Survey respondent's perception of library resources

View the statements below for clarity of this chart.

Statement 1: I value WPI's research and instructional services.

Statement 2: I think WPI's research and instructional services have helped me improve my researching skills.

Statement 3: I think WPI's research and instructional services are unhelpful.

Statement 4: I think WPI does a good job advertising its research and instructional services.

Statement 5: If I have a research project I will seek out help from a research librarian.

Figure eight is less than ideal, with statements one, two, and five averaging below the “agree” level, statement three averaging above the “disagree” level, and statement four averaging below the “neither agree nor disagree” level. This shows that students have a generally neutral to negative perception of the Gordon Library information literacy resources.

The following charts show what resources students have used by different breakdowns, such as major, humanities depth, etc.

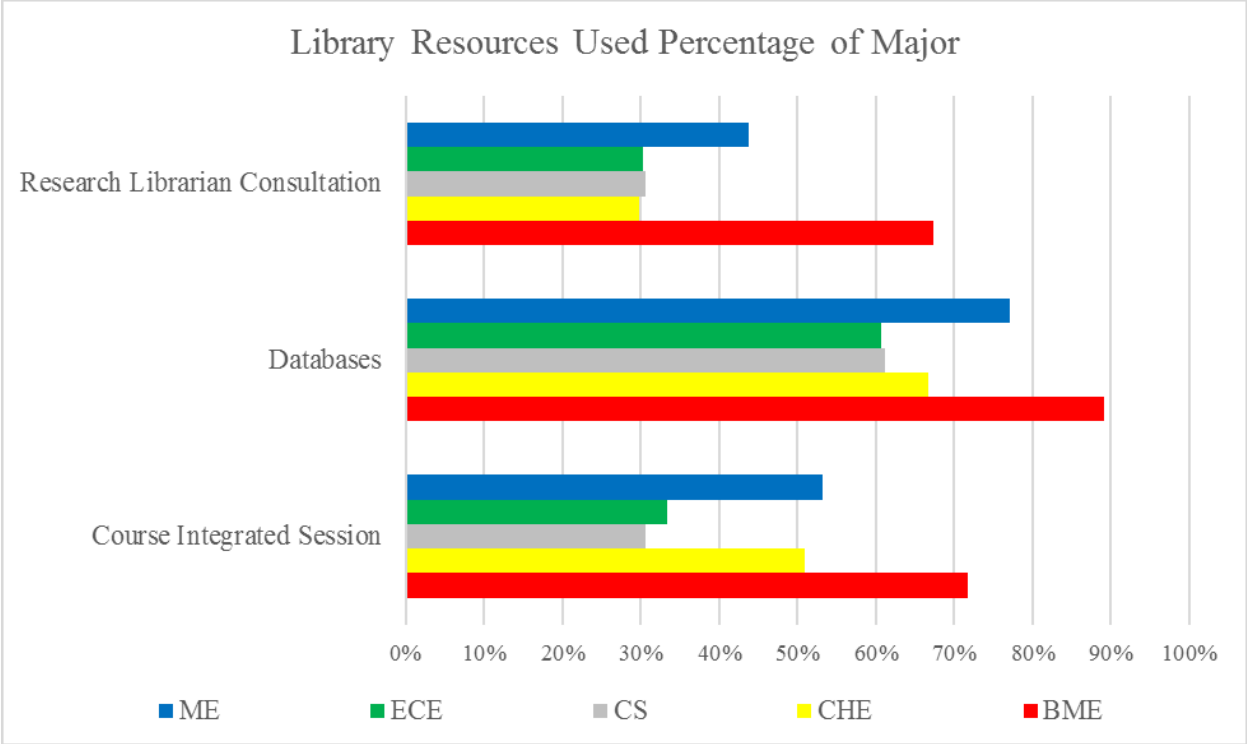


Figure 9: The percentage of students in select majors' usage of library information resources by type

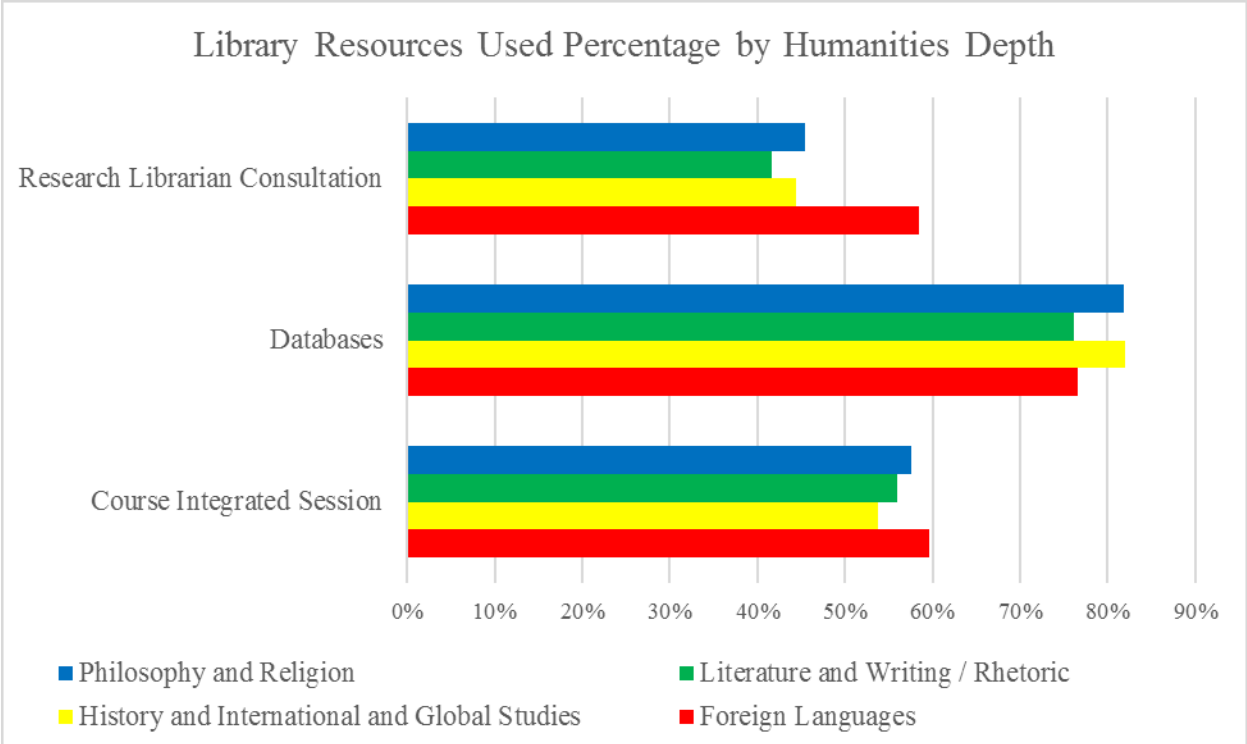


Figure 10: The percentage of students by humanities depths' usage of library information resources by type

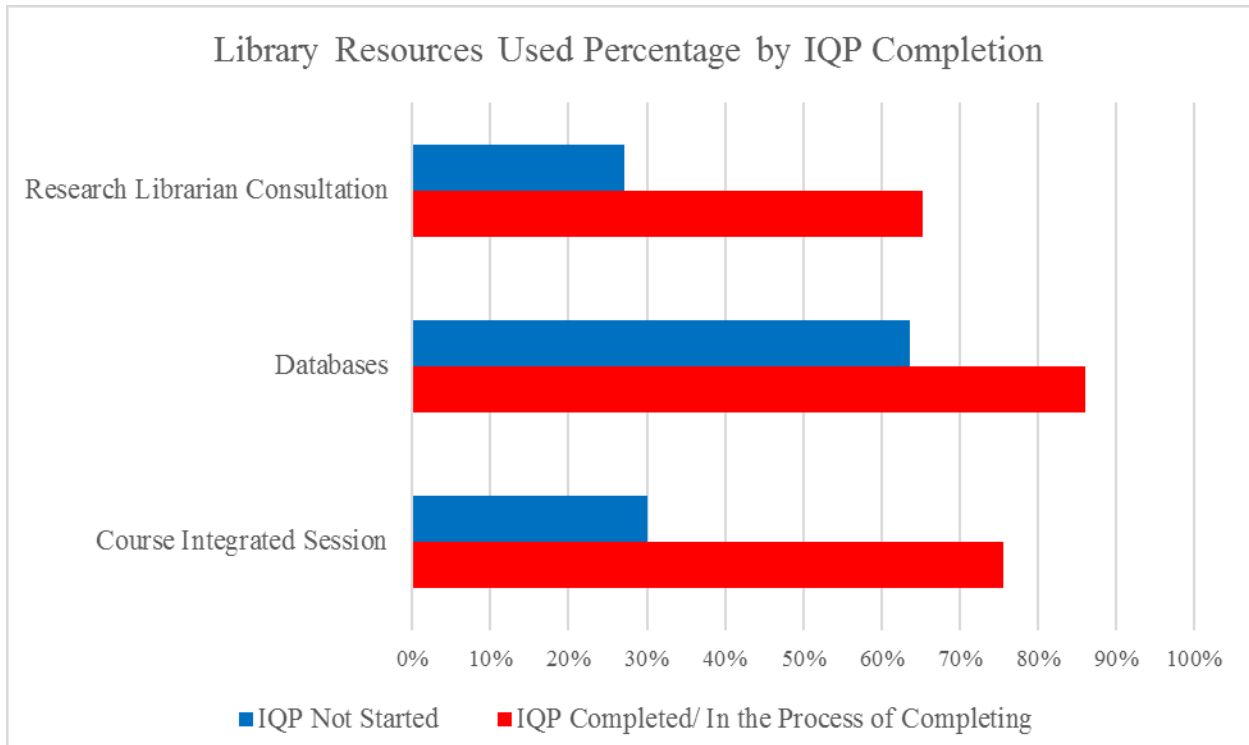


Figure 11: The percentage of students by IQP completions' usage of library information resources by type

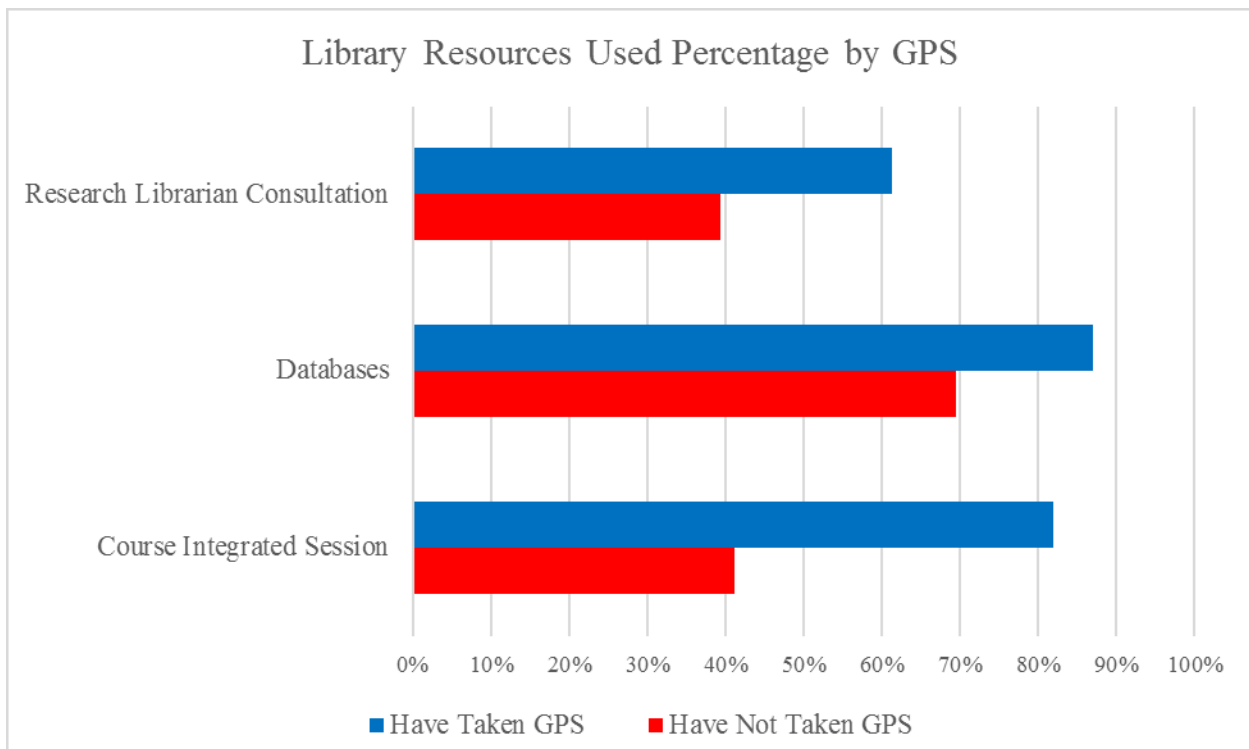


Figure 12: The percentage of students by whether they have or have not taken GPS's usage of library information resources by type

4.2 Focus Groups

This section is organized by main discussion topics of the focus groups.

4.2.1 Summon as an Impediment to Engagement with the Library

The general consensus from all the focus groups, was that Summon is “annoying” and “unclear” to use. One participant claimed “Summon sucks” with other participants agreeing. Another participant said that the search bar needs to be labeled as Summon, as they did not know what the blank bar was actually searching. A few students claimed there was a “disconnect” between Summon and other databases. They said that they wanted “one spot to go” to find what they are looking for regarding their research.

4.2.2 Classroom Integration

A few participants claimed that the in-class integration was redundant. A common comment was that if participants had course integrated sessions in other classes, the sessions seemed exceedingly repetitive. Some suggested that there be a brief overview at some point followed by a more in depth and more course specific in-class session. They felt this would eliminate the repetition and allow for the Research Librarians to better assist them with their project at hand.

4.2.3 Accessing Research and Instruction Librarians

All participants thought that one of the best resources the library offered was interacting with a Research Librarian, either in person or online. They said these meetings and online chats were extraordinarily helpful. One participant said they had multiple meetings with a research librarian. They said it was the most important because the Research Librarians were well versed in finding information. Another student said the online chat with the Research Librarians “saved them” while abroad on IQP. All students that had meetings with Research Librarians first had

meetings in IQP/ID 2050 and most students now see them as a valuable tool to use in their future research projects.

One common critique of the meetings with Research Librarians expressed by several students was that in order to make an appointment with the Research and Instruction Librarians, they had to have most of their work done. They said they felt that they could not go see a Research Librarian to ask where to begin their research, but rather they could only see them after they found had multiple sources. They felt this was not helpful if they did not know where to start.

4.2.4 Advertising

The overall consensus of all three focus groups was that the Research and Instructional Services are not properly advertised. Most students first heard about the resources available in their ID 2050 classes. In addition, one student took GPS and first learned about them in that class and two students first learned about the services in a course-integrated session with a Research Librarian. Specifically, the course-integrated sessions were in Professor Cullon's history class and a freshman writing class.

Focus group participants had suggestions to help improve the advertising. Their suggestions can be broken down into three categories: library website, social media, and signage. For the library website, students wanted the services offered by the Research Librarians listed more clearly with explanations. The effectiveness of social media was also discussed, with students claiming that it did not seem to be used to its full capacity and/or that it was used improperly. They said it would be more helpful if the library's social media engaged with students, posted more content, and stopped posting the hours in which it was open every day.

Participants of the focus group had a few suggestions regarding signage and how it can be used to better promote the library and its resources. Students suggested walk-in hours that were clearly defined and posted somewhere on a sign. When the LCD screen in the front of the library was mentioned, many students were not even aware of its existence. They all noticed the Helpdesk LCD however. Flyers placed on the desks, study spaces, and group meeting rooms in the library were also suggested.

4.2.5 Library Citation Software Support

Focus group participants had a few recommendations regarding references. One recommendation was deciding on a standard for references across librarians and professors (refWorks, EndNote, etc.). Another was that the presentation on EndNote was good, but participants said they would like a “hands-on” lesson where they can use their laptops or a computer lab. They felt that it would be easier to remember the information they learned when they could actually follow along, rather than just watch someone go through the steps in class.

5. Recommendations

The results obtained from the survey and the focus groups have provided helpful information on how and why students use the library's information literacy resources. After analyzing these results, we have determined a set of recommendations for the Gordon Library regarding Summon, course integration, advertising, and other workshops.

5.1 Summon as an Obstacle

The George C. Gordon Library should add Summon quick facts, instructions, and tutorials on their website. We recommend this due to information found in our focus groups. Many participants were unclear on what Summon did and how/why to use it. This recommendation would help to mitigate this issue by informing students about Summon when they went to use it. We recommend that they add eye-catching abbreviated information on commonly asked questions regarding Summon to the library homepage, where the Summon search bar is located (as seen in Figure 12). These questions may include:

- “What does Summon search?”
- “How do I use Summon?”
- “How can I complement Summon with other resources?”

These frequently asked questions would also contain a link to a more in depth and detailed help page on Summon.

What exactly does
summon search?

Summon searches all of
the databases that WPI
subscribes to! The
Databases link under
Quick Links shows all of
our databases!



**Need More Help
Using Summon?
Click Here!**

Figure 143: Example of eye-catching Summon quick facts

Not finding
what you want
on Summon?
Ask Me!



Figure 134: Example of eye-catching Summon help link

We also suggest that the Gordon Library have online tutorials and/or walk-throughs on how to use Summon. These tutorials would be quick videos showing an example of the proper use of Summon. This would allow students to have a visual reference in addition to the written help.

5.2 Course Integration

The following section contains our recommendations regarding Research and Instructional Services integration with courses, based on the feedback from the focus groups.

5.2.1 Syllabi and Course Assignments

We recommend that the Gordon Library contact professors to put Information Literacy Resources on their syllabi. This would remedy the fact that most students often do not learn about the resources offered until ID 2050/IQP in their junior year, as we discovered from the focus groups. At the beginning of most terms, the Writing Center sends out emails to professors explaining their services and recommending they list these on their syllabi. As a result, many professors who have projects or papers that involve any form of writing recommend that students seek help with the Writing Center. They announce this in class, as well as put it on their syllabi and specific assignment sheets. The Gordon Library should employ these same tactics, especially with classes requiring research or design. This would allow for more students to learn about the resources offered and obtain a better knowledge about how they can utilize those resources. It would also alert students that they are encouraged to search out help with the Research and Instructional Librarians.

5.2.2 Canvas and myWPI

We also recommend that the Gordon Library work on integration with course websites on Canvas. The rationale behind this recommendation is the same as that of our previous, as it would allow more students to learn about the research and instructional services offered by the

Gordon Library earlier than in their junior year, when most of our focus participants had. Currently, there are many links to various helpful services offered by Worcester Polytechnic Institute on myWPI. We recommend that the library have a link to their research and instructional services information on Canvas, as well as course websites.

5.2.3 Course Integrated Sessions/Flipped Classes

We recommend more individualized and specific course-integrated sessions. These sessions would be more tailored to the class at hand and less general. This would remedy the critique we received in focus groups about the course-integrated sessions being very repetitive. Many students wished the sessions were more specific to their current topic. The objective of this recommendation is to avoid repetition as much as possible. Specifically, we recommend using the flipped classroom technique. There would be video homework for students to watch that would include general researching tips, information, and tutorials. This would also include a brief overview on the research and instructional services offered at the Gordon Library. Then, the in class session would consist of specific help and group consultations.

5.3 Library Website and Online Presence

This section contains our recommendations regarding the online presence of the Gordon Library due to findings from the focus groups.

5.3.1 Research and Instructional Services Webpage

We recommend that the library website more clearly define all of the research and instructional services offered by the Gordon Library. Specifically, we recommend a listing of all the services, their purpose, and how to use them. This listing would include explanations on how to set up a consultation with a Research Librarian, what to bring to a consultation, and how to

use the chat. It would also include what hours you can “walk-in” to talk with a Research Librarian.

Course & Research Help



In Research and Instruction, our aim is to help you find what you need. From the novice to the experienced researcher, we will help you to conduct your research efficiently and will find a creative way to locate even the most elusive information. We will gladly walk you through various research tools and strategies or point you in the direction you need to go. Our online and on-ground resources are here to support you.

Research and Instruction Librarians provide help in a variety of ways:

- Course-integrated instruction
- [General research workshops](#)
- Individualized [research consultations](#)
- [Research tutorials](#) for self-paced learning
- [Support for faculty](#) scholarship

Our comprehensive LibGuides include valuable information on numerous topics:

- [Databases and Electronic Resources](#) selected for the top sources in each subject
- [Course guides](#) tailored to individual WPI courses
- [Subject listings](#) including all of the guides and databases for a specific academic subject
- [How To guides](#) designed to help with the research process

Learn more about what we offer online by exploring the [LibGuides](#) or [ask us](#); Research and Instruction Librarians are available to help.



Figure 15: Screenshot of Current Research and Instructional Services Webpage

One common critique we received in our focus groups was that the services were not clearly defined and a listing of them with descriptions of their purpose and how to use them would be very helpful. The above recommendation would alleviate this. Currently, the research and instructional services homepage only lists select services provided. For example, the chat is absent from this listing.

Another benefit of this recommendation is that it would minimize the false perceptions on what you need to bring to a Research Librarian consultation. Many students in our focus

groups felt they could not go see a Research Librarian without their research done or without “a really good question”. With this listing on the library website, more students would know when they can consult with a Research Librarian. In addition, no students in any of our focus groups knew that they could walk into one of the offices of the Research Librarians without an appointment. The listing of “walk-in” hours would also show students that they can do this.

5.3.2 Homepage

We recommend that the homepage better utilize their News and Events section on the homepage. This would help alleviate the issues mentioned in the previous section. The News and Events section should contain information about upcoming workshops offered and other information regarding the research and instructional services, such as the walk-in hours as mentioned above. We also recommend that the library homepage include quick facts on Summon, as mentioned in a previous section, and rotating quick tips regarding research help. In addition, we recommend that the chat service is more clearly labeled.

5.3.3 Twitter and Facebook

We recommend that the library use their Twitter and Facebook more appropriately. Students in our focus groups complained that the Twitter was “annoying” because it only posted the hours in which the library was open and the Facebook did not do much of anything. By better utilizing these two resource, the library can resolve this issue and better advertise its services to the student body and WPI community. We recommend that they post about upcoming workshops, current library events, and other interesting information as it relates to the Research and Instructional Services, such as tips and facts.

5.4 Signage

The following section contains our recommendations regarding signage.

5.4.1 Permanent Signage

We recommend that the Gordon Library use more permanent and occasional signage. The first sign we recommend is a permanent sign that will go about the offices of the Research Librarians. This sign will state “Research and Instructional Services: Research Inquiries, Consultations, and Other Research Assistance” (as seen in Figure 13).



Figure 16: Example of permanent sign

The second sign would be a moving sign that went in front of an office of a Research and Instructional Librarian. This sign would state “Come in for Research Help! Walk-ins Welcome!” (as seen in Figure 14). This sign would move to whatever Research Librarian was available for students to walk in with research questions.



Figure 17: Example of moving sign

This will solve the issue of students not knowing where the Research Librarians are and not thinking that they could walk-in if they had a research question. These two issues were very common throughout our focus groups, with many students recommending that the Research Librarians have walk-in hours, when they already employ this tactic. Many focus group participants thought that clear signs would solve this misconception.

5.4.2 Occasional Signage

We also recommend occasional signage on tables and in group study rooms in the library. These would be small pieces of paper on every desk, table, and in every group study room, that outlined the research and instructional services offered in a catchy way. For example, they would say: "Have a research question? Come see a Research Librarian!" and then have a listing of all the research and instructional services provided, as shown in Figure 16.



Figure 18: Example of occasion sign

This would help students learn about the research and instructional services provided by the library sooner than their junior year, like most of our focus group participants had.

5.4.3 Digital Signage

We recommend that the LCD screen in the entrance of the library use bolder, use more eye-catching colors, and display more relevant content. The rationale behind this recommendation is that most students did not even know that this screen existed. Those that did, felt the information was boring and redundant. By making changes to the content and display, these issues would be resolved. Specifically, we recommend that the LCD screen use bright colors, rather than a black background, with animated transitions. We recommend that the content include things such as upcoming events, Research and Instructional Librarian Office Hours, and other similar items, rather than spotlighting student employees.

5.5 Vehicles for Additional Workshops

5.5.1 Endnote

We recommend a workshop on Endnote in a computer lab each term. This would incorporate a run-through on how to use Endnote and an overview on why it is used/how it is

helpful. Many students in our focus groups were unclear on how to use Endnote and some said that whenever they had help on how to use it in class, they could never remember the information because they could not follow along. Being in a computer lab would allow students to follow along with steps being shown to them so that they would better understand what to do.

5.5.2 Gordon-on-the-Go

We recommend incorporating a Research Librarian into “Gordon-on-the-Go” and bringing this service to ID 2050 or other design classes. In the class they could have one big session with the entire class lasting around fifteen minutes where they explained the research and instructional services offered and went over research help. Then the class would break up and the Research Librarians could host consultations outside of the big group with specific smaller groups. This would help eliminate the repetitively of course-integrated sessions, as described in our focus groups, and allow another avenue for the Research Librarians to connect with students and advertise their services to them.

5.6 Look Beyond New Student Orientation

We recommend that the Gordon Library continue their efforts with New Student Orientation (NSO), but look beyond the first two weeks of classes. The freshman in our focus groups felt overwhelmed by NSO and did not remember most of that week, and what they did remember involved meeting new friends and not academics. As a result, we recommend dorm integration with resident advisors. This would allow the library to reach the freshman population in a manner in which they would remember and at a time when they would be interested. This integration would involve a program sponsored by a resident advisor on their dorm floor. The program would be very similar to a course integrated session, but would be more general. It

would have basic researching tips and strategies and explain the research and instructional services that the library offers.

5.7 Morgan Teaching and Learning Center

The next section includes our recommendations regarding faculty orientation. The rationale behind all of these recommendations is that in order to better reach students, faculty must understand the research and instructional services offered and be invested in their need. We recommend a workshop for new faculty that acclimates them to the services offered, provides information regarding their use and necessity, and encourages them to highlight the resources to their students. We also recommend a workshop for current faculty that gives a brief overview of the current research and instructional resources offered and updates them on the latest changes, workshops, and events. We recommend that these workshops emphasize increasing Information Literacy as a core value of course objectives.

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Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Worcester Polytechnic Institute IRB# 1
HHS IRB # 00007374

12 January 2016
File:15-320

Re: IRB Application for Exemption #15-320 "Identifying Impediments to Students Use of Library Research and Instructional Services"

Dear Prof. Cullon,

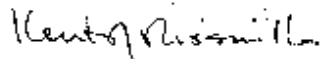
The WPI Institutional Review Committee (IRB) has reviewed the materials submitted in regards to the above mentioned study and has determined that this research is exempt from further IRB review and supervision under 45 CFR 46.101(b): (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

This exemption covers any research and data collected under your protocol from 12 January 2016 until 11 January 2017, unless terminated sooner (in writing) by yourself or the WPI IRB. Amendments or changes to the research that might alter this specific exemption must be submitted to the WPI IRB for review and may require a full IRB application in order for the research to continue.

Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions about the terms of this exemption.

Thank you for your cooperation with the WPI IRB.

Sincerely,



Kent Rissmiller
WPI IRB Chair

Appendix B: Survey Questions

Identifying Impediments to Students' Use of Library Research and Instructional Services Survey

We are conducting this survey in order to identify people who may be willing to attend a focus group about library research and instruction services. This survey is voluntary and has been exempt by the IRB. Your answers will be anonymous.

1. What is your class year?
 - a. Freshman
 - b. Sophomore
 - c. Junior
 - d. Senior
 - e. Other: _____

2. Have you completed/are working on:
 - a. IQP (Including ID2050)
 - b. MQP
 - c. Neither

3. What is your Major? **Note:** If you have more than one major, select the major you identify with the most.

4. What subject did you do or do you plan to do your humanities depth in?
 - a. Art/Art History
 - b. Music
 - c. Drama/Theatre
 - d. Literature and Writing/Rhetoric
 - e. History and International and Global Studies
 - f. Philosophy and Religion
 - g. Foreign Languages
 - h. Other: _____

5. Did you take a Great Problems Seminar?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

CONTINUES ON BACK

6. Check all of the library's research or instructional services you have had or used:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research Librarian Consultation | <input type="checkbox"/> Course Integrated Session with a Research Librarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library's Research Databases | IF CHECKED, WHAT COURSES DID YOU HAVE THE SESSION IN? (Check all that apply) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> GPS |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Inquiry Seminar/Practicum |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> IQP (Including ID2050) |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> MQP |

7. Place a check the statement that best describes how you feel:

	I value WPI's Research and Instructional Services	I think WPI's Research and Instructional Services have helped me improve my researching skills.	I think WPI's Research and Instructional Services are unhelpful	I think WPI does a good job advertising its Research and Instructional Services	If I have a research project, I will seek out help from the research librarian
Strongly disagree					
Disagree					
Neither agree nor disagree					
Agree					
Strongly agree					

Would you be willing to participate in a focus group? If yes, please write-in your email address.

- a. No
- b. Yes

email address: _____

END OF SURVEY

Appendix C: Focus Group Consent Form

Consent Form

Purpose:

The Gordon Library at Worcester Polytechnic Institute is conducting a program assessment. You are invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to examine the helpfulness of the library's information literacy resources. Specifically, we want to understand how these resources can be better utilized to help students.

Procedures:

If you participate in this study, you will be in a group of approximately 10 students. There will be a facilitator who will ask questions and facilitate the discussion, and two note-takers to write down the ideas expressed within the group. If you volunteer to participate in this focus group, you will be asked some questions relating to your experience with the Gordon Library.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.

Benefits and Risks:

Your participation may benefit you and other Worcester Polytechnic Institute students by helping to improve student services. No risk greater than those experienced in ordinary conversation are anticipated.

Everyone will be asked to respect the privacy of the other group members. All participants will be asked not to disclose anything said within the context of the discussion, but it is important to understand that other people in the group with you may not keep all information private and confidential.

Confidentiality:

Anonymous data from this study will be analyzed and reported to Gordon Library staff. No individual participant will be identified or linked to the results. Study records, including this consent form signed by you, may be inspected by the administrators. The results of this study may be presented at meetings; however, your identity will not be disclosed. All information obtained in this study will be kept strictly **confidential**.

Consent:

By signing this consent form, you are indicating that you fully understand the above information and agree to participate in this focus group.

Participant's signature: _____

Printed name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Focus Group Notes

Amber, Seth, Karen, Daniel

All Juniors/All ID2050

1. What do you find to be the most valuable information literacy resource provided by the library?
 - a. Seth: Had a couple meetings with resource librarians
 1. Most important
 2. Know the most
 - ii. Summon used the most
 1. Easily accessible and a search tool
 2. Everything the library has is in there
 - iii. Resource Guides are really helpful
 1. Information in a digestible way
 - iv. Librarian chat (nice, doesn't use)
 - b. Daniel: used in IQP
 - i. Librarian chat useful, not used
 - c. Karen: Never used Summon, heard about it
 - i. Meeting with Librarians useful
 1. Know all the resources
 - d. Amber: Only met with the librarian once
 - i. Thought it was useful
 - ii. Didn't know they existed until ID2050
2. What do you find to be the least valuable?
 - a. Dan: Only used the resources talked about
 - i. Don't know about others
 - ii. ID2050
 - b. Seth: The in class sessions were helpful but not as helpful as actually meeting with the group with the RL
 - i. Seemed redundant
 - ii. Took away time from ID2050 (agree from Karen & Amber)
3. What could the library do to improve the quality of your assistance?
 - a. Amber: They help if you go for the help
 - i. Have to go see them
 - ii. Tedious to fill out (not required to fill out though)
 - b. Karen: Probably wouldn't have gone to RL if not part of ID2050
 - i. Wish knew before ID2050
 - ii. Helpful
 - c. Dan: Tried setting up apt with RL
 - i. Possibly their fault
 - d. Seth: When attending meetings with RL
 - i. Ask they you bring your 8 top sources
 - ii. No real format to submit them
 1. Better way to submit them as actually references instead of a list
 2. Hate Endnote (Reference Manager) – Not user friendly
 3. Invite RL to group to see resources to not have to print out resources
4. How did you first hear about the resources offered?
 - a. Karen: ME class with RL in lab section
 - i. Would have been nice to hear about it earlier
 - ii. InfoSession freshman year (probably wouldn't have gone)
 - iii. Engineers without Border – Research
 - iv. Doing research, make an appointment
 - v. Quick
 - b. Seth: GPS (A-Term)

- i. Signs in the library
 - ii. Pointing to RL
 - iii. Getting book in library is a huge process
 - iv. Map of floor 3 is wrong
 - v. Organize the library better
 - c. Amber: IQP ID2050
 - i. Helpful to know earlier
 - ii. Good to know what resources are available
 - iii. myWPI database searching assignment
 - d. Dan: IQP ID2050
 - i. NSO would have been good to put in
 - ii. Needed book, just asked librarian
 - iii. Signage
- 5. Do you think they are properly advertised/What can they do better in order to reach more people?
 - a. Amber: Advertising Library Renovation
 - i. Advertise resources there
 - b. Seth: Social Media
 - i. Lots of websites that are very different
 - ii. Resources guides have a better aesthetic looks different that WPI
 - iii. Nothing exciting about going to the library website
 - iv. List of databases is really long – not interesting
 - 1. List keywords for each database instead of a full explanation
 - 2. Search/Ctrl+F
 - v. Disconnect between Summon and the other databases
 - 1. Advertise that better
 - vi. Taylor and Francis Online – Couldn't get 1 article
 - 1. Confused about how to do inter-library loan
 - vii. Integrated in Summon?
 - 1. No easy step to Iliad
 - viii. Make a more cohesive system
 - ix. Use Google scholar more (Amber agree)
 - x. Do research from home
 - 1. VPN/RDP – Doesn't allow to sign-in
 - 2. Full-Text finder sometimes? works
 - 3. Easier
 - c. Karen: Databases are helpful
 - i. Takes hours to find correct ones
 - d. Dan: Some do the same thing
 - i. Difference between them

1. What do you find to be the most valuable information literacy resource provided by the library?
 - a. Theresa: databases
 - i. On IQP had to change direction
 - ii. Needed sources, received sources from chat
 - b. Tim: DB used most in IQP
 - i. Information session with Laura
 - c. Julie: DB
 - i. Chat
 - ii. Information session
 - d. Emily: first place to go, DB
 - i. Chat
 - e. Patricia: used DB to just look for patents on MQP
 - f. Hasson: DB
2. What do you find to be the least valuable?
 - a. Hasson: Not aware of all the resources
 - i. Used EndNote
 - ii. Export/import problems
 - b. Julie: Use the DB the most
 - i. Never look at books
 - c. Patricia: In Class presentations
 - d. Emily: EndNote, never used
3. What could the library do to improve the quality of your assistance?
 - a. Tim: presentation on EndNote good
 - i. Need hands-on time (Julie agree)
 - b. Julie: Bring own laptop, etc.
 - c. Hasson: During IQP, the session with the librarian for an hour is helpful
4. How did you first hear about the resources offered?
 - a. Emily: Works in the library (books)
 - i. Training for resources offered – every year
 - ii. Wouldn't know unless the training
 - b. Julie: C-term Freshman year English Class
 - c. Tim: InfoSession presentation
 - i. More in ID2050
 - ii. Depends on humanities class
 - d. Theresa: Writing class freshman year
 - i. Looking around library website
 - e. Hasson: History class with Cullon
 - i. Would have helped freshman year
 - ii. Took sophomore class freshman year for environ policy
 - iii. Google scholar, ended with just searching
 - f. Patricia: with upperclassmen in group project
 - i. ID2050
5. Do you think they are properly advertised?
 - a. Theresa: More clear on website
 - i. Lots of digging
 - b. Tim: Add to NSO
 - i. Do presentation like in classes (RAs)
 - c. Julie: Don't know what to look for
 - d. Patricia: More specific to each class
 - e. Emily: Website does not have same things as advertised

- i. Offer workshops for specific areas such as patents
- 6. What can they do better in order to reach more people?
 - a. Tim: Papers hung up on campus
 - i. Targeted tutorials (SL)
 - ii. RA training
 - b. Theresa: Do RL's have walk-in hours?
 - i. Post on campus for walk-in hours
 - c. Emily: swarms of emails from CDC (apply to librarians)
 - d. Hasson: Email at the beginning of each term
 - e. Julie: Doesn't read library emails
 - i. Talk to profs to add to syllabus
 - ii. Patricia: Specific workshop for IQP/MQP/HUA

1. What do you find to be the most valuable information literacy resource provided by the library?
 - a. Preston: JSTOR(db) (Rebecca)
 - i. Database of journal articles
 - ii. ERIC (db)
 - b. Jesse: Databases
 - i. IQP looked up through databases
 - ii. Librarian helped look through databases
 - iii. Sit down meeting
 - c. Whitney: Librarian Meeting (Laura)
 - i. Difficulty researching
 - ii. Very helpful in teaching jargon, etc.
2. What do you find to be the least valuable?
 - a. Preston: "Summon Sucks" (Whitney Agrees)
 - i. One spot to go
 - ii. "Google scholar sucks"
 - iii. Main page of library (misleading with search box)
 - b. Whitney: ID2050 learn Summon
 - i. Keywords/logic didn't make any difference even when taught
 - c. Jesse: Summon annoying to use not always clear
 - d. Caroline: "I don't know what Summon is"
3. What could the library do to improve the quality of your assistance?
 - a. Whitney: Label Summon (it's not a search bar)
 - b. Preston: Decide on recommendations
 - i. refWorks
 - ii. EndNote
 - iii. Standardize with departments/professors
 - c. Jesse: EndNote (not clear why it was worth using)
 - i. Use the web version for PC not Mac
 - ii. Never used any features
4. How did you first hear about the resources offered?
 - a. Caroline: During NSO
 - i. Event touring Library
 - ii. Told about services
 - iii. Overwhelming
 - iv. Have a hand-out to reference after
 - b. Jesse: From high school
 - i. Special reading Room learned from writing class
 - ii. Inter-Library loan
 - iii. Expected librarians had other purposes
 - c. Preston: Pre-Existing knowledge
 - d. Whitney: Same knowledge extended
 - i. ID2050
5. Do you think they are properly advertised?
 - a. Whitney: helpful to have earlier, not needed until later
 - i. Introduced when you need it the most
 - b. Jesse: nice to be sooner
 - i. Not needed sooner
 - ii. Syllabus include the existence
 - c. Preston: Marketing Improvement
 - i. Pushed more

6. What can they do better in order to reach more people?
 - a. Whitney: advertise on library's website
 - i. Didn't pay attention to posted things on the wall/TV
 - ii. Food as incentive (not pizza -> sandwiches or wraps)
 - b. Jesse: Research is more helpful than search bar
 - i. The TV said We have video games now
 - c. Preston: TV in the library (didn't know it was there)
 - i. Sign in front (Jesse)
 - ii. Office Hours (actually advertise)
 - iii. Website misinformation (Jesse)