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Reference Resilience: Balancing sustainability with customized and effective research support

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Reference Resilience: Balancing Sustainability with Customized and Effective Research Support

Laura Hibbler, Brandeis University (*formerly College of the Holy Cross*) & Jennifer L. Adams, College of the Holy Cross

1

How Do We Reach OUR Students?

Existing Research Services

Do existing services effectively meet students' research needs?

Example: Assessment of reference desk statistics suggests that librarians could spend their time more effectively.

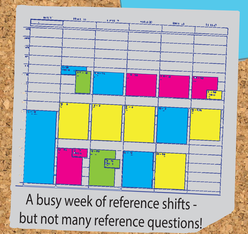
Local Culture

What types of research support do students on our campus prefer?

Example: This small, residential college has not seen significant use of virtual reference, while in-person consultations have been popular.

Sustainability

How can we sustain a service that is both popular and time-intensive?



A busy week of reference shifts - but not many reference questions!

"It's a great way to learn how to use the libraries' pretty complex research systems without feeling dumb. I felt like I could conquer anything after the appointment. It's exactly tailored to the research you need, but at the same time gives you the resources for any research you could do."

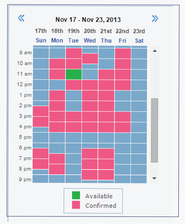
"Instead of learning how to use databases and such in a classroom with the teacher talking at you, the librarians help help to teach you how to get the information and go through the process one-on-one,:

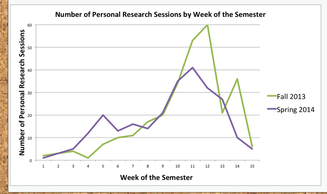
"You can ask direct questions about the type of research you are performing rather than having to listen to a generalized information session on research."

2

Effective...But Is It Sustainable?

LibCal schedule for Personal Research Sessions during a particularly busy week





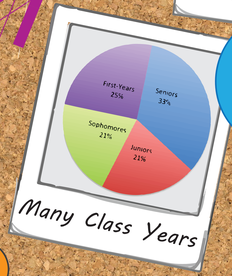
2013-2014 stats

Extended reference: 239 questions

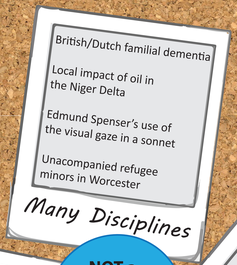
Research sessions: 565 appointments

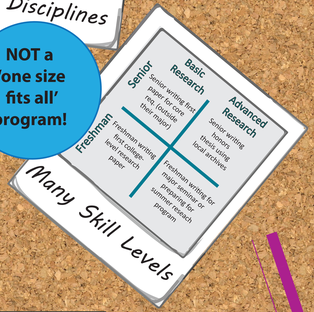
3

Standardization: Impossible?



NOT a 'one size fits all' program!





"So helpful...and really helped me get acquainted with the databases, set up RefWorks accounts, etc...I truly don't know what I'd have done without it and how I know that I can ask all the librarians for help as necessary...you all are really fantastic and we're so lucky to have you!"

"As a freshman, I was unsure of the research process and where to locate as well as how to use the different databases. The research session helped me find useful peer reviewed scholarly sources for my paper in much less time than I would have spent trying to finagle it on my own."

Do We Still Seem Available for Student Support?

We polled both our reference student workers and our Library Student Advisory Committee in Fall 2014 about the quality of our research support.

Both groups said that they felt librarians were still available to students, we were still providing good service, and "students' needs were always met."

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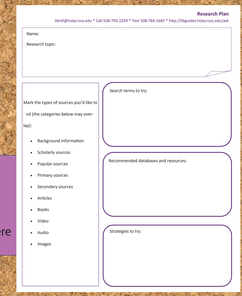
Customized, Effective, SUSTAINABLE!



Research Plan

libref@holycross.edu * Cell 508-793-2259 * Text 508-784-1685 * http://libguides.holycross.edu/xxx

Name:
Research topic:

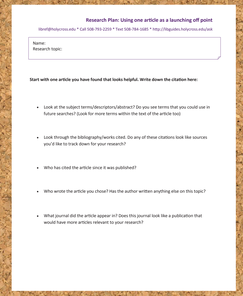
Mark the types of sources you'd like to find (the categories below may overlap):

- Background information
- Scholarly sources
- Popular sources
- Primary sources
- Secondary sources
- Articles
- Books
- Video
- Audio
- Images

Search terms to try:

Recommended databases and resources:

Strategies to try:



Research Plan: Using one article as a launching off point

libref@holycross.edu * Cell 508-793-2259 * Text 508-784-1685 * http://libguides.holycross.edu/xxx

Name:
Research topic:

Start with one article you have found that looks helpful. Write down the citation here:

- Look at the subject terms/descriptors/abstract? Do you see terms that you could use in future searches? (Look for more terms within the text of the article too)
- Look through the bibliography/works cited. Do any of these citations look like sources you'd like to track down for your research?
- Who has cited the article since it was published?
- Who wrote the article you chose? Has the author written anything else on this topic?
- What journal did the article appear in? Does this journal look like a publication that would have more articles relevant to your research?

Learning Materials (distributed during PRS)

-Reusable

-Customizable

-Reinforce the instructional focus of consultations