Why Seek Expertise in an Age of DIY?

One Library’s Qualitative Approach to Understand When and Why Students Seek Reference Assistance
Limitations of Statistics

Statistics couldn’t answer two key questions:

1. How did students conduct research?
2. Why did students ask librarians for help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time of Day</th>
<th>Core Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7am-10am</td>
<td>None ID’d - basic directional, circ, or ready reference question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10am-1pm</td>
<td>Location - identifying where information sources are available online and in the library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1pm-4pm</td>
<td>Authority - establishing contextually appropriate sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4pm-7pm</td>
<td>Inquiry – defining and refining research question and related topic parameters/focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7pm-10pm</td>
<td>Searching – defining keywords, employing search strategies across different searches sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10pm-1am</td>
<td>Evaluation - examining search results, revising keywords and/or sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>1am-close</td>
<td>Attribution - documenting sources, understanding copyright</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communication – synthesizing and presenting sources for new knowledge creation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insight - seeking to understand that information has value, information creation is a process, and insights are outcomes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Duration of Question:
- 5 minutes or less
- 6-10 minutes
- 11-20 minutes
- 21-60 minutes
- 61 minutes or more

Answering Library Location:
- Calabasas
- Drescher

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU
DATA AREN'T INSIGHTS
• WHY do students ask librarians for help?
• How do Students research?

Qualitative Data
Let's us peek inside to learn WHAT students are thinking so we understand the WHY!
Semi-Structured Interviews:
Ask Probing Questions

...not the alien kind of probing

"With hindsight, if you had it to go do over again, tell us how you would look for information for this question?"
Crafting Interview Questions

Poor Question

What did you learn from the librarian?

Better Question

Let’s think back again to what you observed in working with a librarian. Are there strategies or tools that the librarian used that you would want to try or use in the future?
I need to interview you for my study.

I don't know who you are...
But I will find you...
...and give you an Amazon gift card for participating!
Interviews were Recorded, Transcribed and Analyzed using NVivo
...making sense of, a set of field notes or transcripts from focus groups or in-depth interviews.
From Flashcards to Codes

Table 1: Self as researcher
- Library as place
  - Student workers
  - Perceptions of library services
- Positive experiences
  - Approachability

Table 2: Library experience
- Outcomes
  - Mechanics
- Negative experiences

Table 3: Path to the librarians
- Referral
  - Past librarian use
- Instruction

* Emotions:
  - Positive
  - Negative
  (Feels)

* Learning about librarians
  - Specific information
    - Primary
  - Choosing help: difficult research

Diagram:
- Physical space
- Development
- Skills
- Information
- Search strategies
  - Location
  - Library
  - Format
  - Book/Article
- Time
  - Physical space
  - Development
  - Skills
  - Information
  - Search strategies
  - Location
  - Library
  - Format
  - Book/Article
  - Emotions
    - Positive
    - Negative
  (Feels)
# Codebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code Name</th>
<th>TIME (CM) - AGREED on 05.11.16</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Brief Definition</strong></td>
<td>time spent doing research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full Definition</strong></td>
<td>describes quantity and/or the quality of the time period(s) allotted to doing research; Time spent devoted that relate to doing research for a college assignment, including the time spent with a librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When to Use</strong></td>
<td>whenever a student quantifies the amount of time (e.g., two weeks, three hours) whenever a student generalizes the amount of time (e.g., a long time) whenever the student describes productivity of the time (e.g., wasted my time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>When Not to Use</strong></td>
<td>as it relates to hypothetical of what another student would or would not spend time doing for research “I don’t have the time to go in and sit down for an hour or whatever” [referencing the friend of the interviewee who discussed feelings about meeting with a librarian] [00:00 110915(2)]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example/Quote</strong></td>
<td>“I don’t know exactly how long, but I’d say … a couple of hours …” [07:00 110915(1)] “I searched for a long time on my own and I just shouldn’t have wasted that time.” [25:00 110915(1)]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Use Qualitative Analysis Software

1. Virtual Filing Cabinet

2. Data Tagging

3. Searching and Retrieving Text
Interviewer: Now, we're actually recording. Like I said, we're going to be talking about what is this like to look for information as a college student. I'd like you to maybe just start talking about that process. Now that you're in college, you've been in college for a few years, what is that process like whenever you need to find something, what do you do?

Interviewee: It depends on what kind of assignment I get. If I just want to find basic information, I just may Google or just Wikipedia or just go on the website and search for that information. If it's like a research paper, I will just go online and go to the Pepperdine [library 0:00:51] and maybe search on the database and e-journals [0:01:00] just depends on what subject I'm looking for. I would pick a subject to see what articles I can use.
Coded Transcript:

Code: view all the transcript sections by CODE.

Analysis

Interviewee: I'll just try different keywords and see if I can get any hits and then if I do get something that I like and I don't know if it's credible I'll kind of use the same keywords that I used and plug it in on the database.

Interviewer: Okay.

Different transcripts

Reference 1 - 0.57% Coverage

Yeah. I guess I try to do stuff on my own first and then the librarians are my second stop because I want to have like something before I go to the professor.

Reference 1 - 0.09% Coverage

Trying to do it on my own.

Reference 1 - 0.39% Coverage

Yeah, I don't know. I think it would help everybody for sure but it's just hard to ask [0:18:00] for help sometimes.
Findings

A DIY preference doesn’t mean an unwillingness to seek help.