

What Actually Happens: An Ethnographic Investigation of Student Library Use

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Research Team

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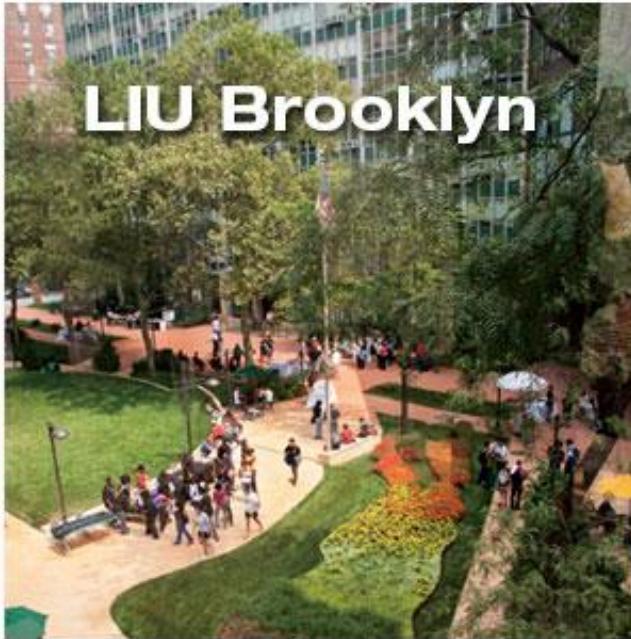
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ETHNOGRAPHIC CODING TEAM MEMBERS

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Background

Our University



Our Study's Timeline

Summer 2012	IRB approval received
Fall 2012	Survey distributed
Spring 2013	Observations conducted
Spring 2013	Interviews conducted
Spring 2014	Coding process started
Spring 2016	Coding process completed

Ethnographic Research

- The study of a culture to improve one's understanding of it
- Investigates few cases in thorough detail
- Qualitative methods, rooted in anthropology:
participant observation, in-depth interviews, etc.
- Time intensive!

Why?

- Examine our local culture of student research habits
- Provide need-based services
- Make ethnography a consistent and ongoing practice

Previous Major Studies

- University of Rochester “Studying Students” Project
<http://www.alastore.ala.org/detail.aspx?ID=2322>
- Rutgers Ethnographic Research Project
<http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/staff/groups/ethnography/reports.shtml>
- University of Illinois ERIAL Project
<http://www.erialproject.org>
- CUNY Undergraduate Scholarly Habits Ethnography Project
<https://ushep.commons.gc.cuny.edu>

Our Study: Mixed Methods Research



Data Collection

Survey Overview

- Fifty-one questions on technology integration, library use, and research and study habits
- Administered Fall 2012
- 1100+ responses
- Used survey data to create interview questions

NOVEMBER 19TH

PARTICIPATE
SO YOUR
LIBRARY
CAN INNOVATE

TAKE THE LIBRARY SURVEY
FOR A CHANCE
TO WIN
A MACBOOK AIR



WE WILL ALSO BE GIVING AWAY BARCLAYS CENTER NY NETS TICKETS, GIFT CARDS, AND MORE!

WHEN? NOVEMBER 19TH, 3-6PM
WHERE? LIBRARY LEARNING CENTER, 3RD FL.

Sample Survey Questions

“Have you had any library instruction while at Long Island University?”

“During the last academic year, how often was the Libraries' website a basic part of your research process?”

“Which of these resources do you use most often?”

“Would you use text messaging to get an answer to a reference or research question from the LIU Libraries?”

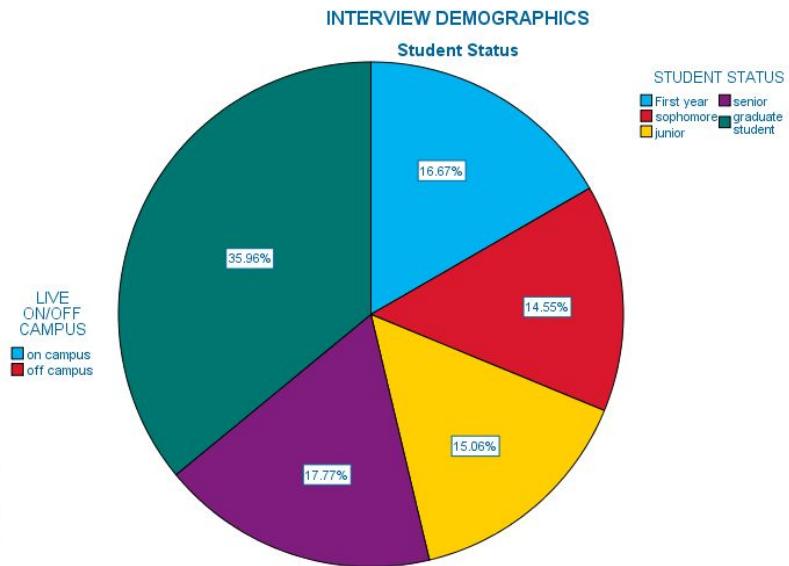
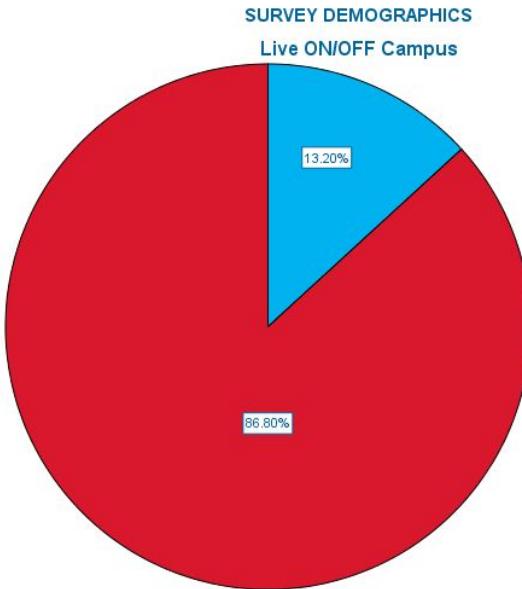
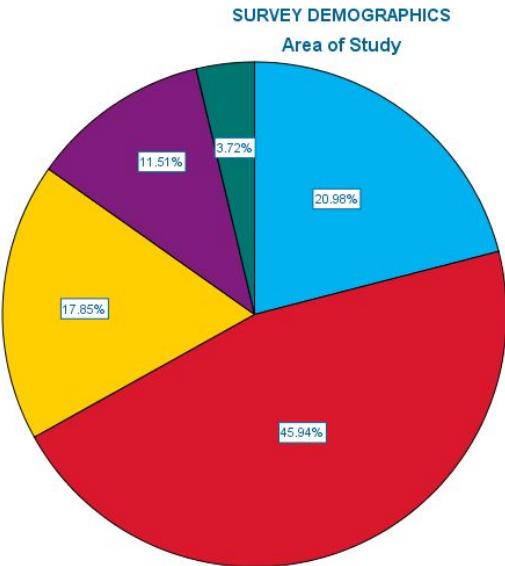
LIU Post Survey Team



Survey Kick-Off Party



Survey Demographics



Observation Overview

- 32 hours of unobtrusive observations in the Post and Brooklyn Libraries
- Recorded field notes
- Recorded interpretations
- Used observational data to create interview questions

Observation Recording Sheet

LIU Libraries' Ethnographic Study Observation Recording Sheet

Observer Name: Katherine Boss

Location: Reference Room—tables along windows and carrels

Date: 2/19/13

Time started: 11:30am

Time ended: 12:50pm

A - Activities are goal directed sets of actions-things which people want to accomplish

E - Environments include the entire arena where activities take place

I - Interactions are between a person and someone or something else, and are the building blocks of activities

O - Objects are building blocks of the environment, key elements sometimes put to complex or unintended uses, changing their function, meaning and context

U - Users are the consumers, the people providing the behaviors, preferences and needs

What I Saw/Raw Data (A, E, I, O, U/Spradley)	What I Thought/Interpretation
<p>Every table is occupied with more than one student.</p> <p>Three guys are sitting on the window ledge, with four of their friends at the first table. Many men come and join and leave the table over the course of an hour. Three of the men are wearing suits and talking on the phone. Most of them have iPhones. At the largest, the group totals 10 men. Most of them stand around and talk as they join the group – they have coopted the table but rarely use the chairs. (12:25 – four of the men are now sitting, but have not unpacked very many materials from their bags, they are mostly talking).</p> <p>Lots of talking. Furniture moved - computer chairs have been rolled from the computer area to the tables.</p> <p>(12:12 – there has been significant turnover, one table is now free, and another table is all new students.)</p>	<p>The Reference area along the windows is often used for collaborative study in groups, this type of collaboration often requires a lot of discussion and can get loud – need spaces where students can work in groups and not disturb people trying to study quietly.</p> <p>Furniture is often moved and rearranged – new investments in furniture should be modular, portable, and resistant to carving/graffiti.</p>

Interview Overview

- Recruited interviewee during the survey stage
- Conducted 30 one-hour semi-structured interviews
- Included “show me” questions
- Videotaped and professionally transcribed audio

Interview Questions

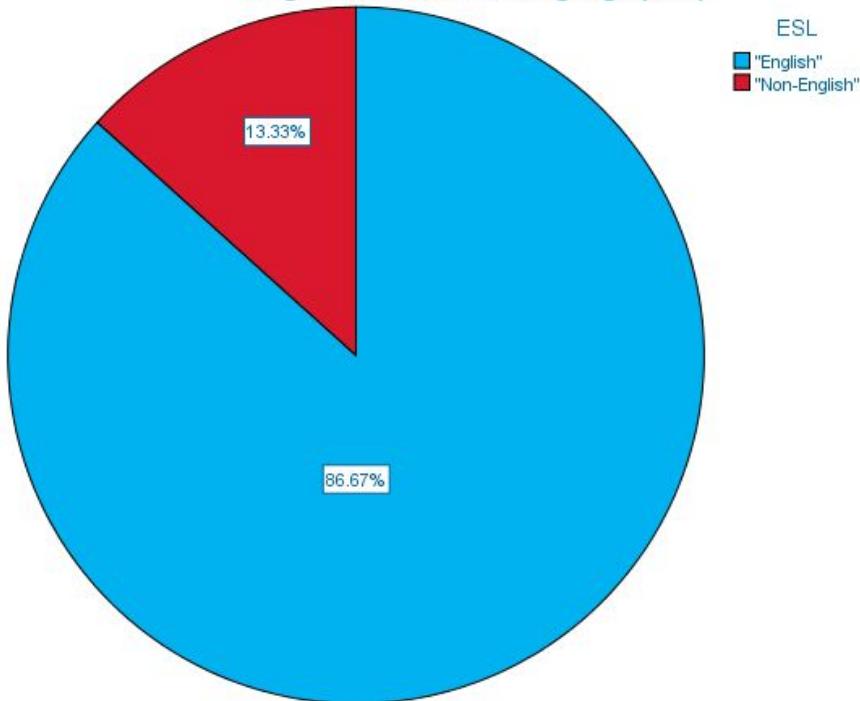
“When you get an assignment for a class, what is the very first thing you do?”

“Do you seek help from library personnel?”

“When you study in the library, do you prefer to be around other students, or have more of your own personal space?”

Interview Demographics

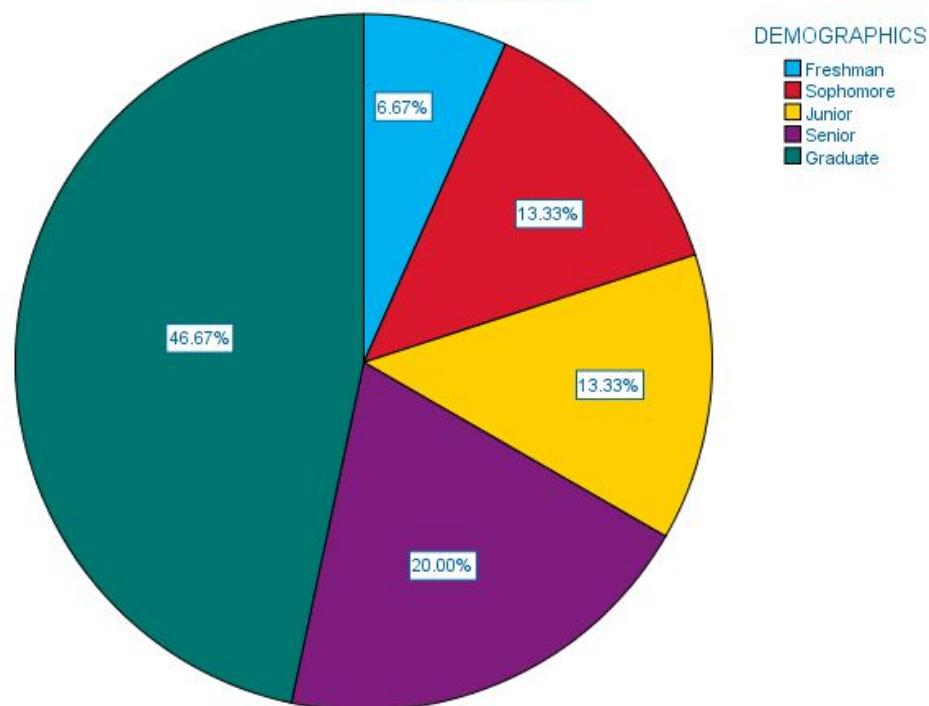
English as a Second Language (ESL)



ESL

■ "English"
■ "Non-English"

Students Status



DEMOCRAPHICS

■ Freshman
■ Sophomore
■ Junior
■ Senior
■ Graduate

Data Analysis

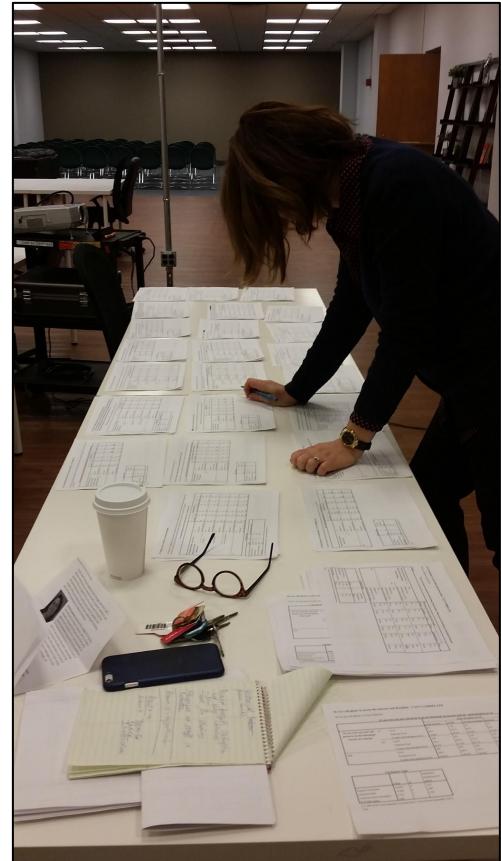
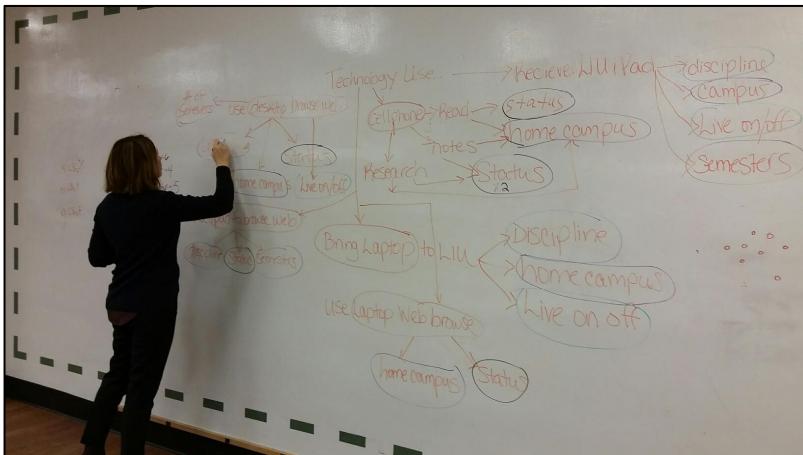
Survey Analysis

1. Library staff and graduate student entered data into SPSS
2. Quantitatively analysed closed-ended questions using proprietary survey software
3. Performed content analysis for open-ended questions

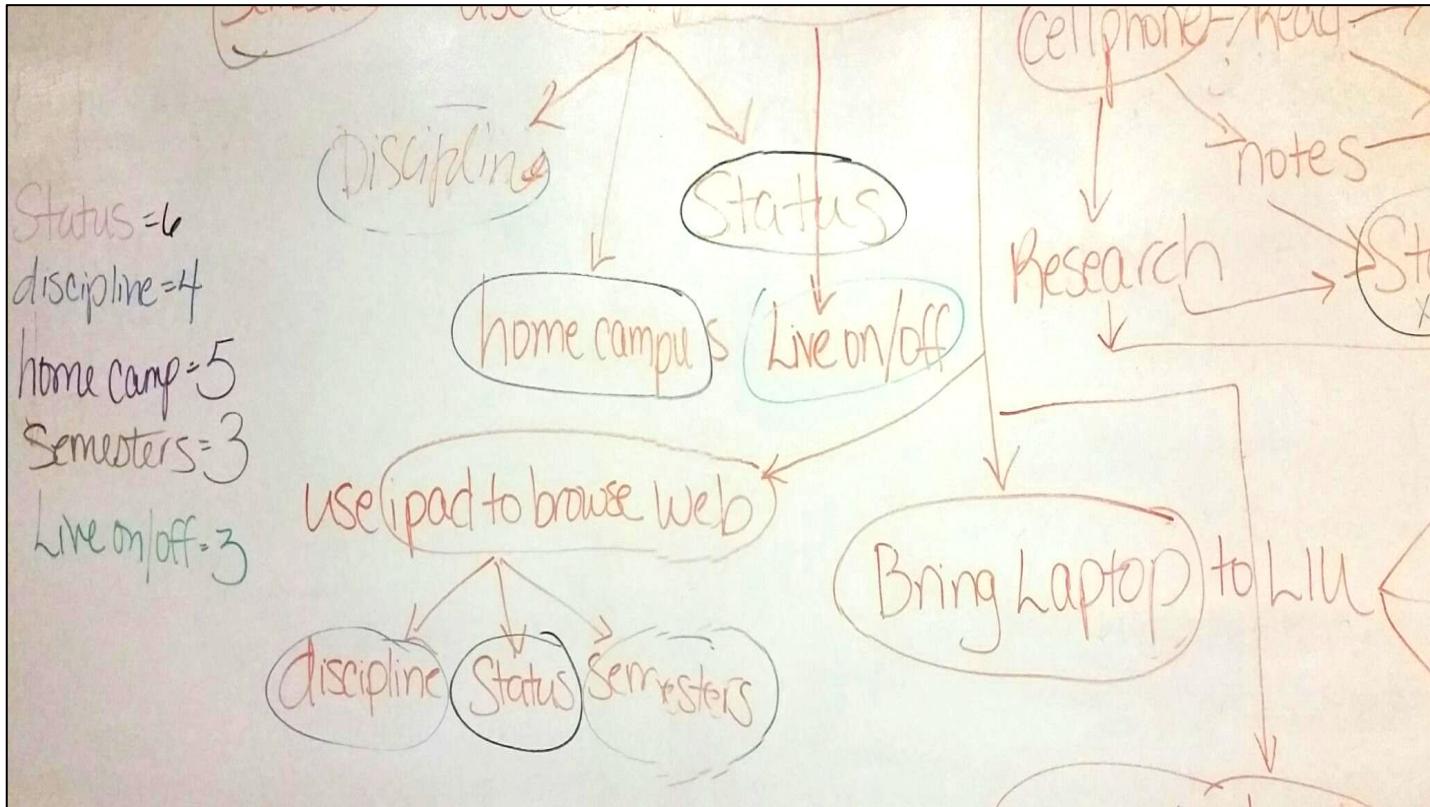
Survey Analysis

4. Graphically depicted major themes to identify “areas of focus”

5. Themes further analyzed



Survey Analysis



Observation and Interview Codebook

1. Started with observations and sample interview word counts
2. Added codes identified through coding process (6 iterations)
3. Resulted in 459 codes at question, unit, and thematic levels

Student Research Strategies	RESSTRAT	First Source Consulted	FIRSTSRC
	RESSTRAT	Search Engine Use	SEARCHENG
	RESSTRAT	Evaluating Sources	EVALSRC
	RESSTRAT	Shelf Browsing	SHELFBRW
	RESSTRAT	Catalogue Browsing	CATBRW
	RESSTRAT	Keyword Search	KEYSEARCH
	RESSTRAT	Copy and Paste as notetaking	CPPSNODE
	RESSTRAT	Textbook Acquisition	TEXTBKAQ

Observation Coding

1. Combined into one document and analyzed for frequency counts
2. Read field notes and coded the text
3. Library staff and graduate student entered data into SPSS
4. Statistical analysis performed

POST LIBRARY

ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY

OBSERVATION NOTES

April 3, 2015

OBSERVATION #2

Location Code	Day Code	Time Code	Unit Code	Theme	Sub Theme
PSBLIS	W/H	2-3P	BEH	TECHUSE	LAPTOP
			BEH	TECHUSE	IPAD
			BEH	STUDYHAB	INDPREF
			BEH	LIBSPA	NOCARREL

1

Periodicals reading room area had one group of 5 students and one group on 2 students. Both groups were talking among them-selves. The group of 5 had 2 laptops on the table. One student in the group was using headphones. Students had water on the tables. They were sitting by the window tables. One girl walked in with the coffee and joined the group. The group with only 2 students was sitting at the computer stations. One student got up and went to use printer or Xerox machine. He asked someone at the reference desk for change. Another student walked in and went to sit by the computer station.

Location Code	Day Code	Time Code	Unit Code	Theme	Sub Theme
PSPERREAD	W/H	2-3P	PPL	LIBSPA	NUMBERSTUD 1-9
			BEH	STUDYHAB	TALK
			BEH	TECHUSE	LAPTOP
			BEH	TECHUSE	HEADPHONES
			BEH	STUDYHAB	MAKECOPY
			BEH	LIBSVAUSE	PRINT

Interview Coding

1. Transcripts coded individually, by pairs and as a team (4 coders)
2. Paired teams and entire team reconciled coding to ensure inter-coder reliability
3. Library staff and graduate student entered data into SPSS
4. Statistical analysis performed

040887b Interviewer/Interviewee/Cameraman

Interviewee: → Yeah. Yeah, as long as I remember my Dropbox password, I have my phone with my KeePass on there.

Interviewer: → Yeah, the KeePass, that's a great app. That's awesome. Have you ever taken books out of the library? In addition to your articles, do you use books very often?

Question Code	Unit Code	Major Thematic Codes	Subthematic Codes
USELIBBK	BEH-NO	LIBCOLUSE	BOOKS
STRESSTRAT	BEH	TECHUSE	MOBAPP

Interviewer: → Why is that, just out of curiosity?

Interviewee: → Usually because any—I've collected an extensive amount of books from when they leave them out upstairs just to get rid of them, so if I ever need to use a book to find a direct reference, but it's usually I pull from here, the articles.

Interviewer: → Okay, so you have your own little personal library someplace.

Interviewee: → Yeah.

Interviewer: → That's pretty cool. In addition to—well, we have the print books, the stacks. Have you ever been in the stacks? Have you ever navigated for your note?

Question Code	Unit Code	Major Thematic Codes	Subthematic Codes
USELIBBK	BEH	LIBSPA	STACKS
USELIBBK	BEH	LIBSPA	SHELFBRW

Findings

Survey Findings

- 75% of students received some type of instruction on how to utilize the Library and its resources
- 60% of students use the Libraries' website between 1 and 4 times per week
- Students use Google and the Libraries' databases equally to complete their work
- Majority of students were not taking advantage of University iPad program

Observation Findings

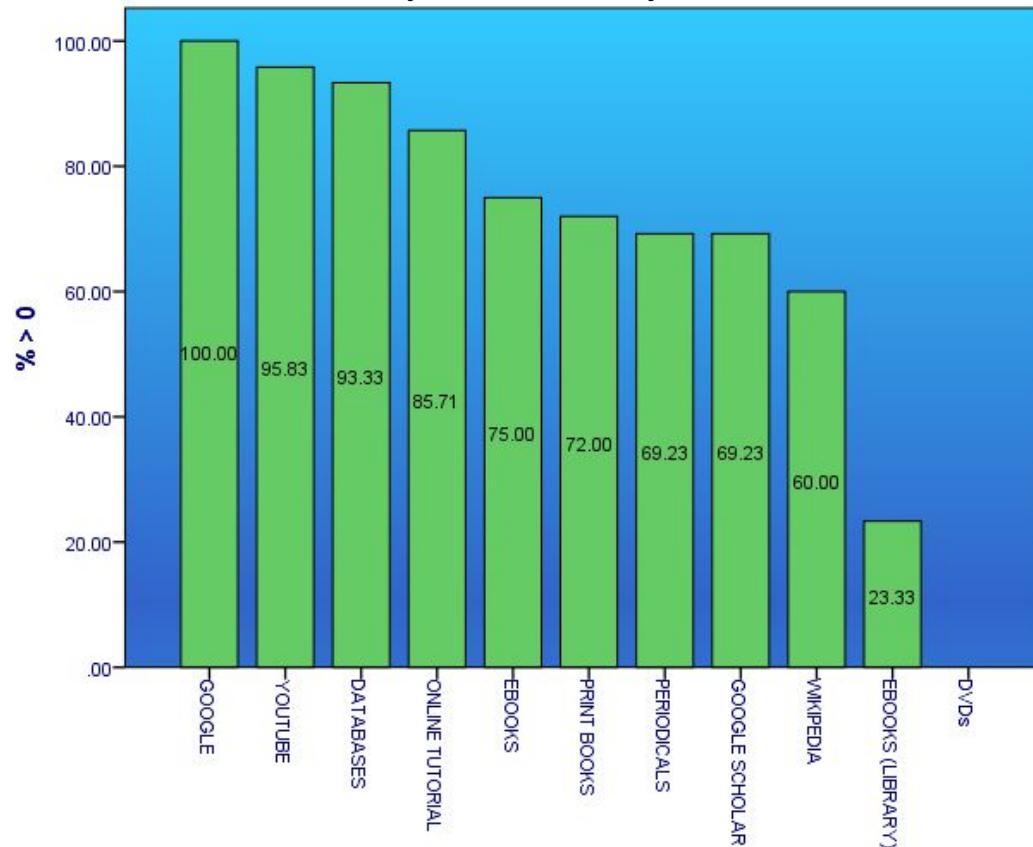
- Coming and going; leaving personal items
- “Cocooning”
- Multitasking supported by technology
- Seated in groups but working individually
- Headphones for music or to signal need for uninterrupted work

Interview Findings

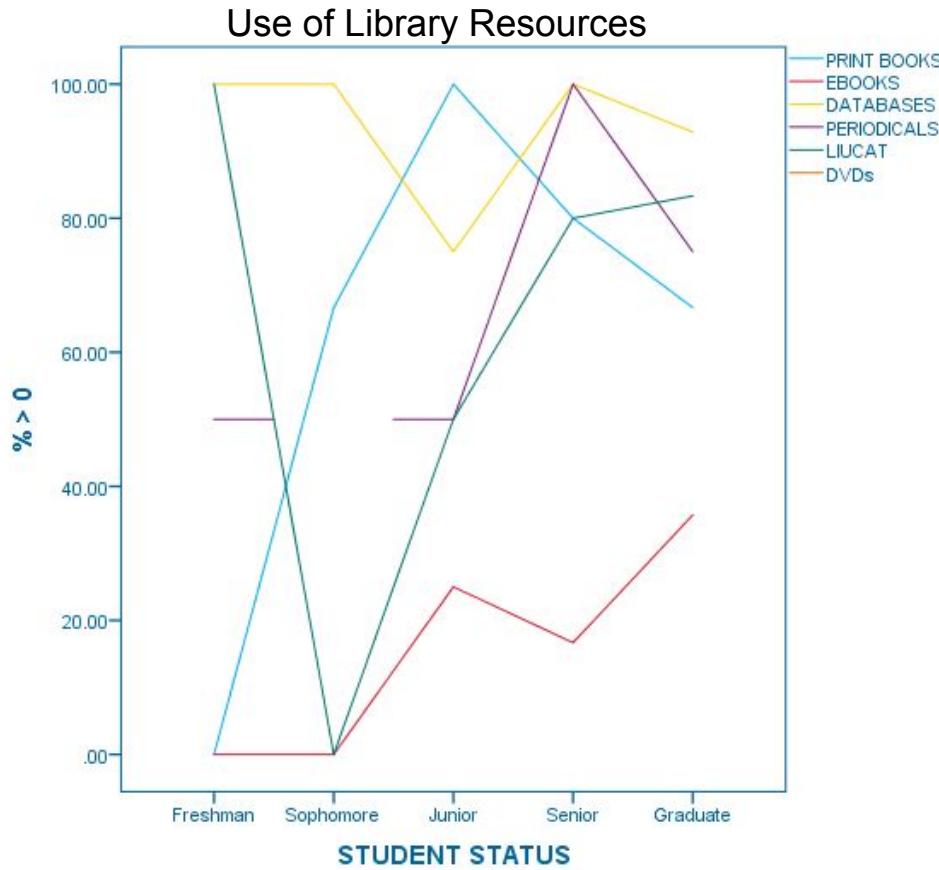
- Students go to peers and instructors first for research questions; embarrassed to approach librarians
- Creation of study materials using flash card apps or compiling materials in iBooks app
- Need for more comfortable spaces and extended library hours

Interview Findings

Library & Non-Library Resources

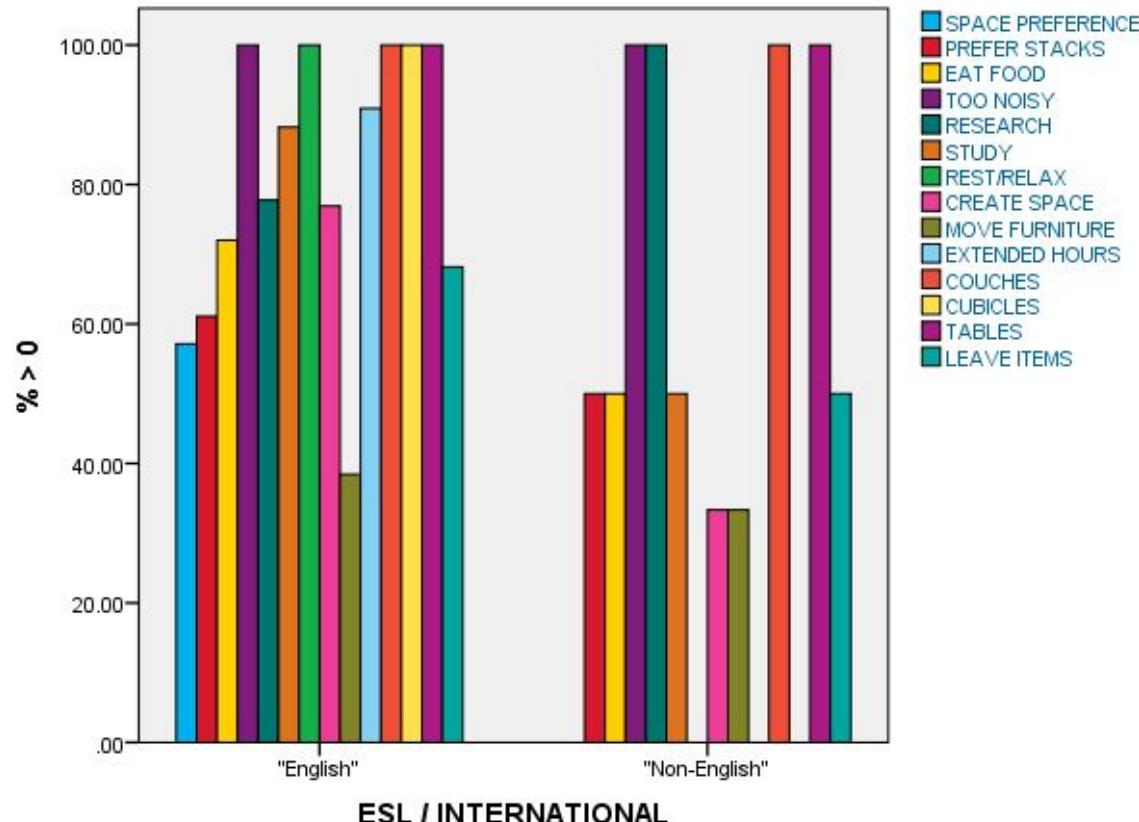


Interview Findings



Interview Findings

Use of Library Space



Triangulation

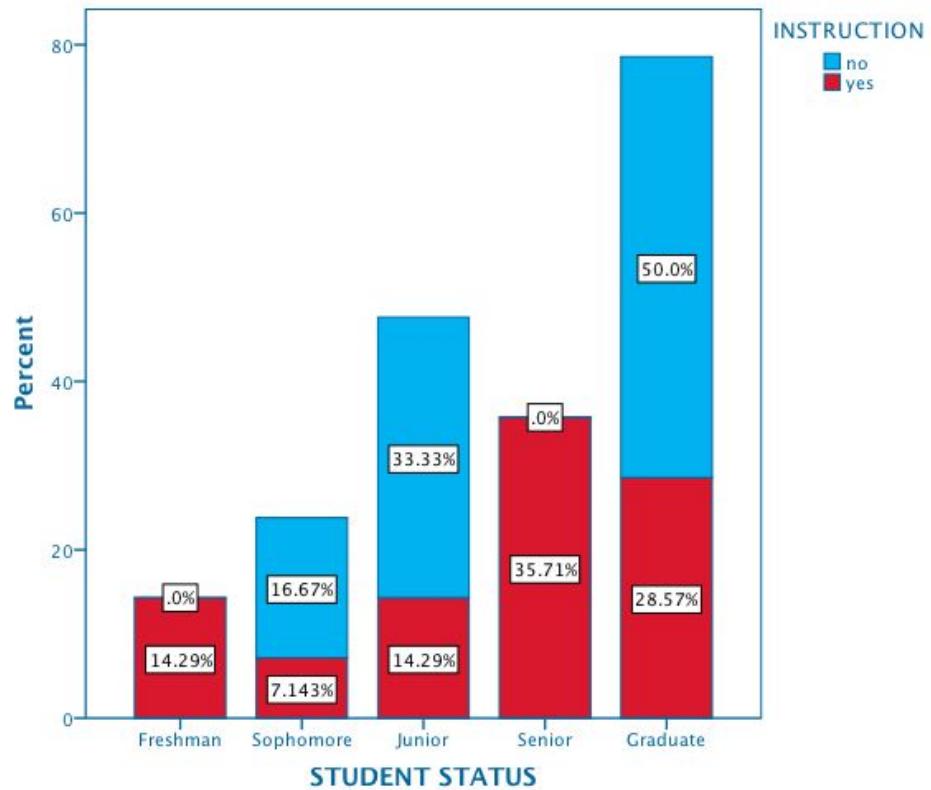
Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon.

[Triangulation \(social science\) - Wikipedia, the free ...](#)

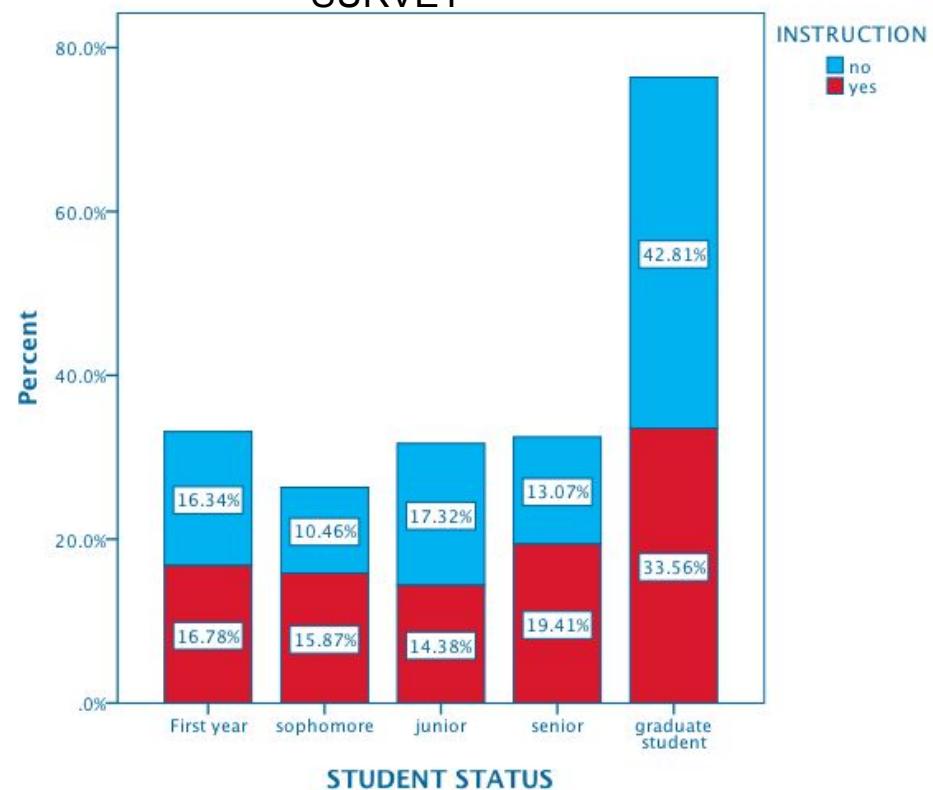
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_\(social_science\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangulation_(social_science)) Wikipedia

Library Instruction

INTERVIEW

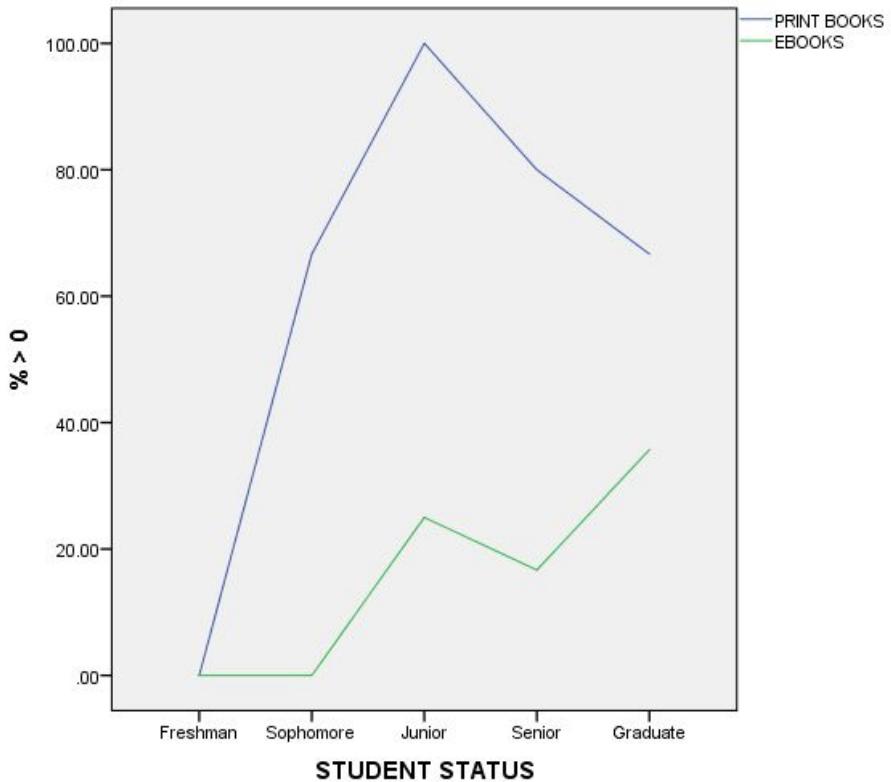


SURVEY

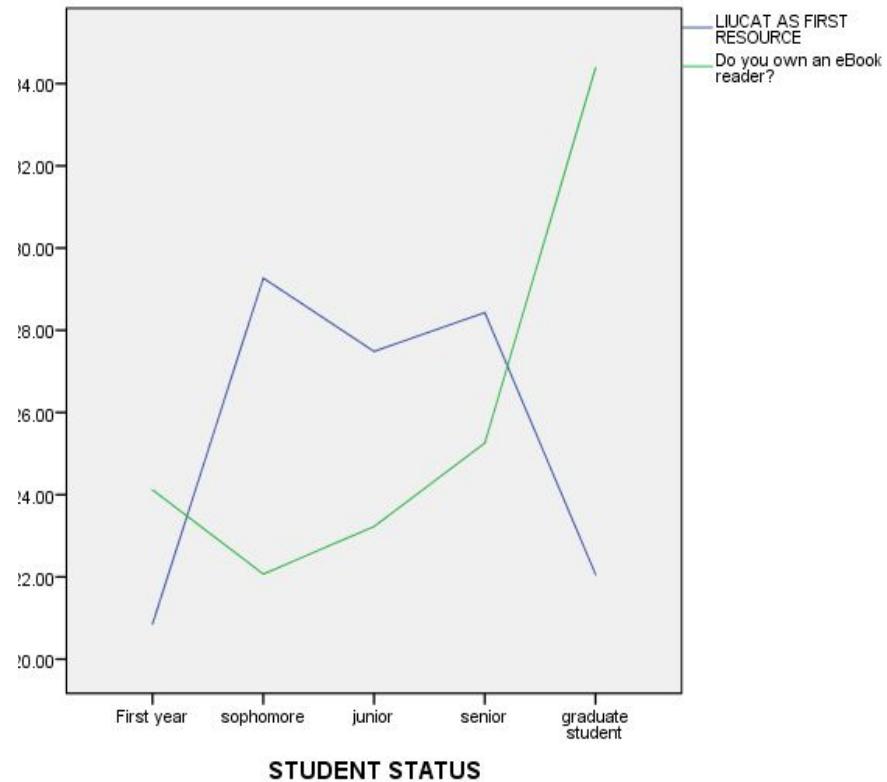


Print vs. eBooks

INTERVIEW

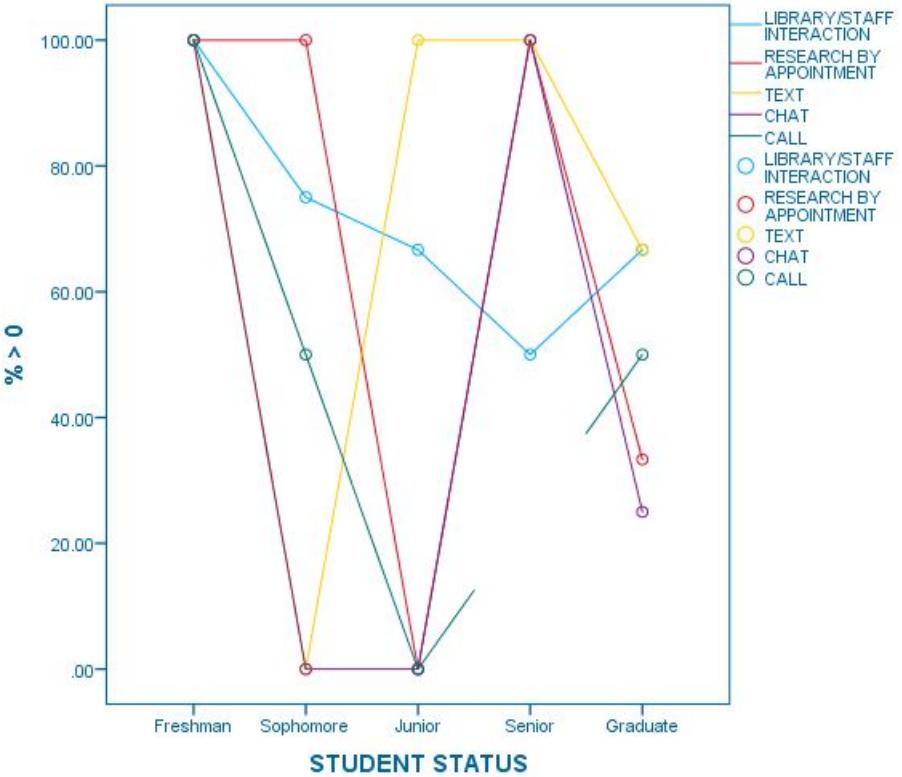


SURVEY

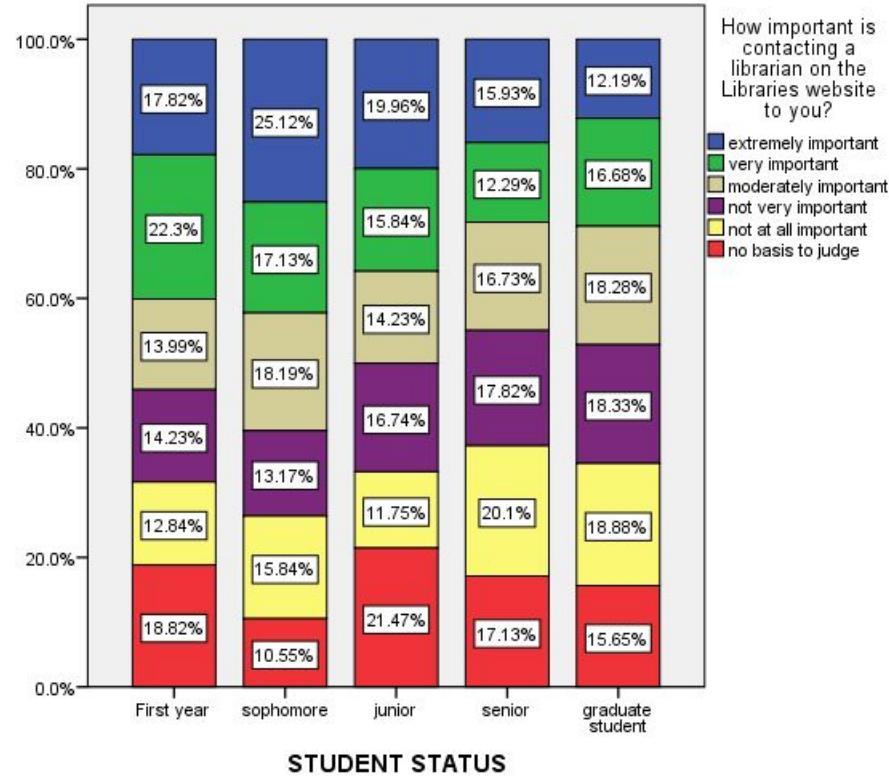


Librarian Contact

INTERVIEW



SURVEY

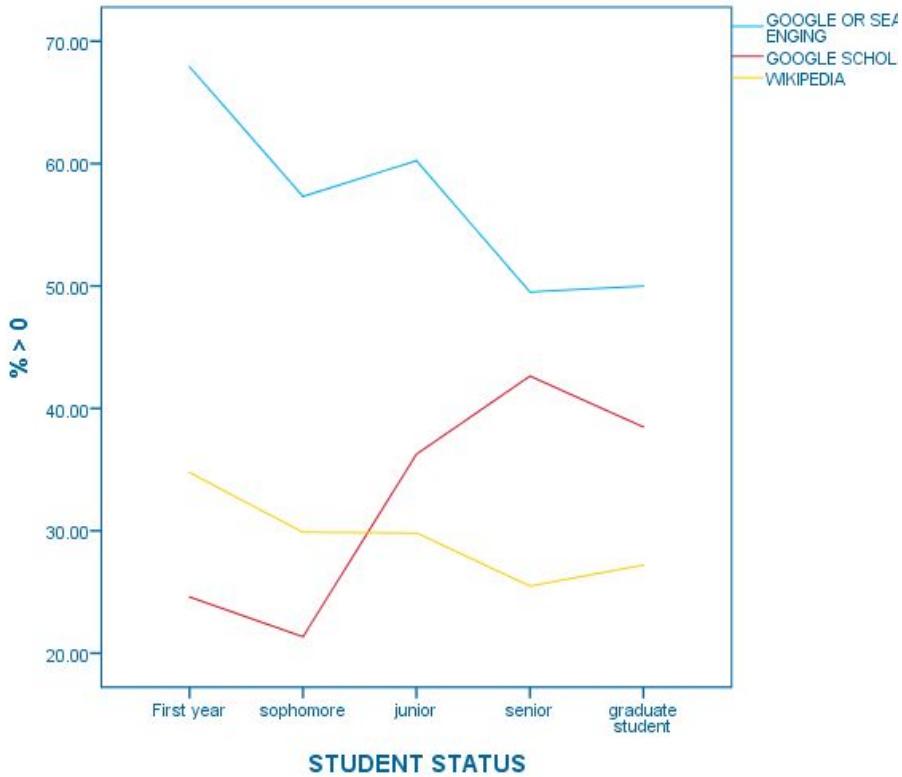


How important is contacting a librarian on the Libraries website to you?

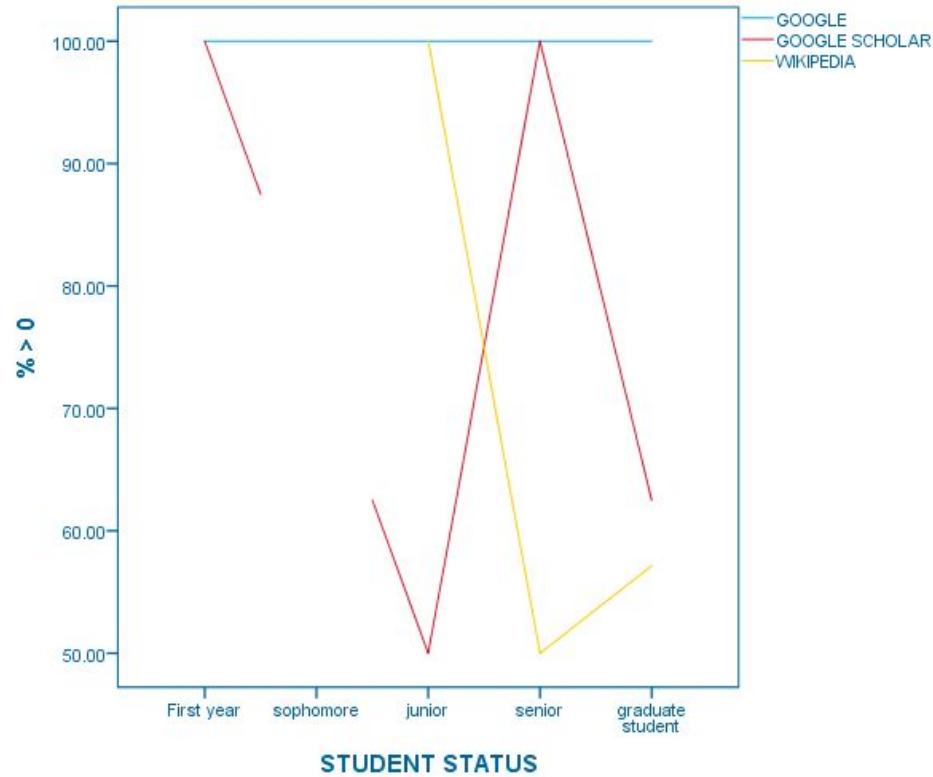
- extremely important
- very important
- moderately important
- not very important
- not at all important
- no basis to judge

Non-Library Resources

INTERVIEW



SURVEY



Important “Triangulation” Tidbits

- Librarians are the third point of reference
- Students DO evaluate sources
- Students prefer shelf browsing
- Signage is important

Changes Made

Instruction

- At one campus, basic library instruction and an information literacy exam were integrated within the first semester curriculum
- At another campus, librarians performed syllabus analysis for various Departments to identify library instruction opportunities
- Librarians became involved in Learning Communities to communicate directly with students early in their academic careers

Reference Services

- Extended hours
- Website redesign
- Skype by appointment

 Would you like to Skype with a librarian instead of coming to the library?:

Yes
 No

Desired date and time of Skype appointment:

Submit



Space Modifications

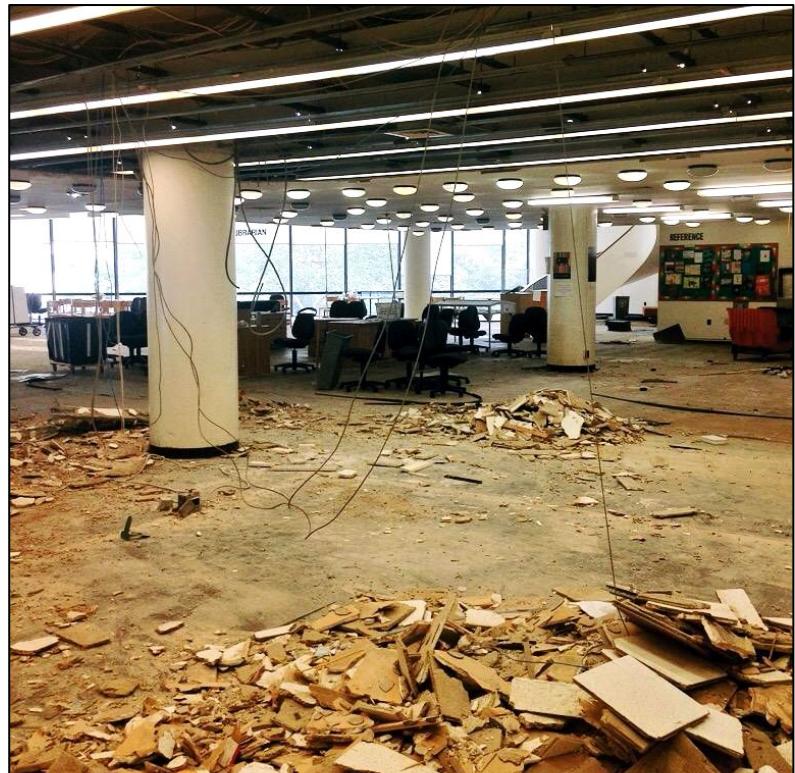
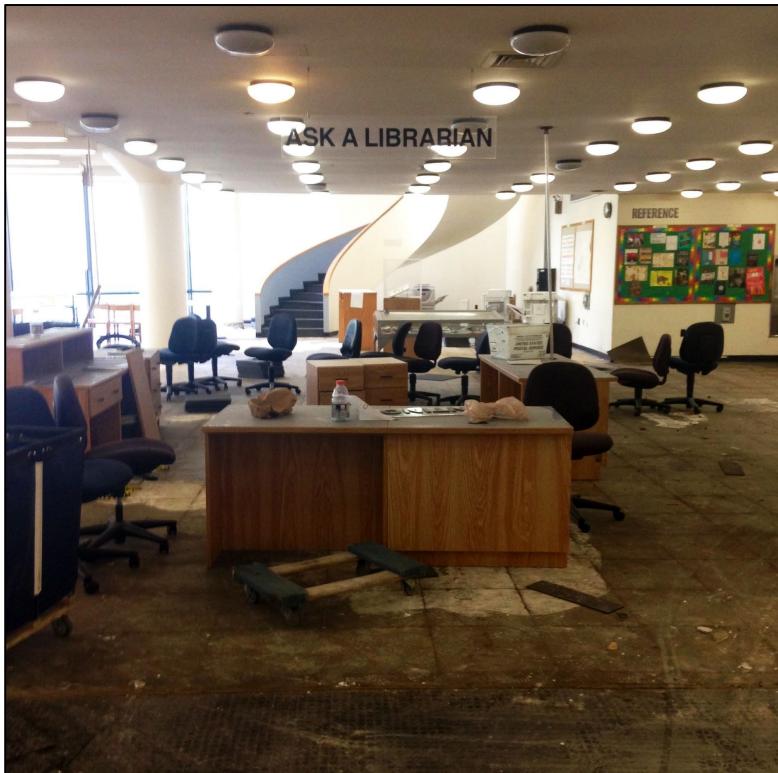
- Both libraries underwent renovations that include additional group study areas and natural light
- A “lounge environment” and group tables were added
- “Genius Bar” workspace was implemented



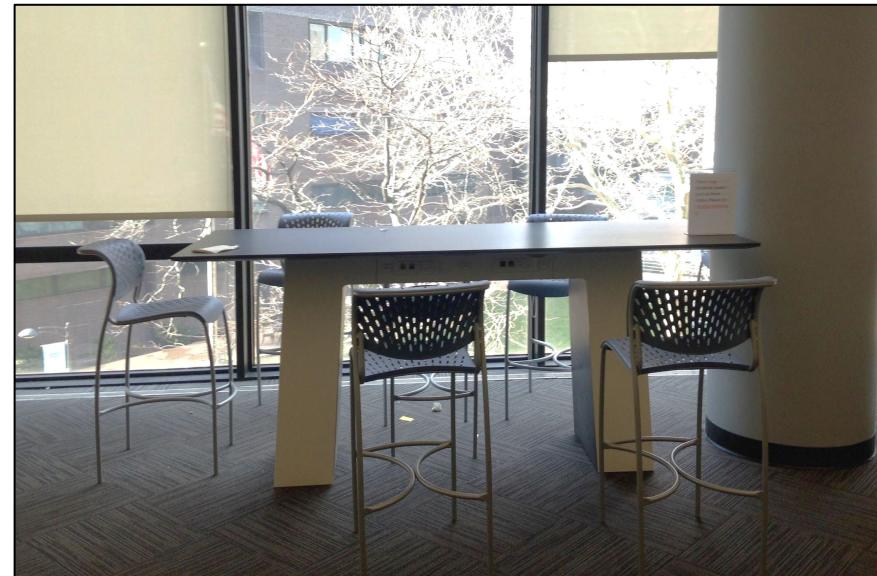
Post Library Renovations



Brooklyn Library Renovations (Before)



Brooklyn Library Renovations (After)



Questions?

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