

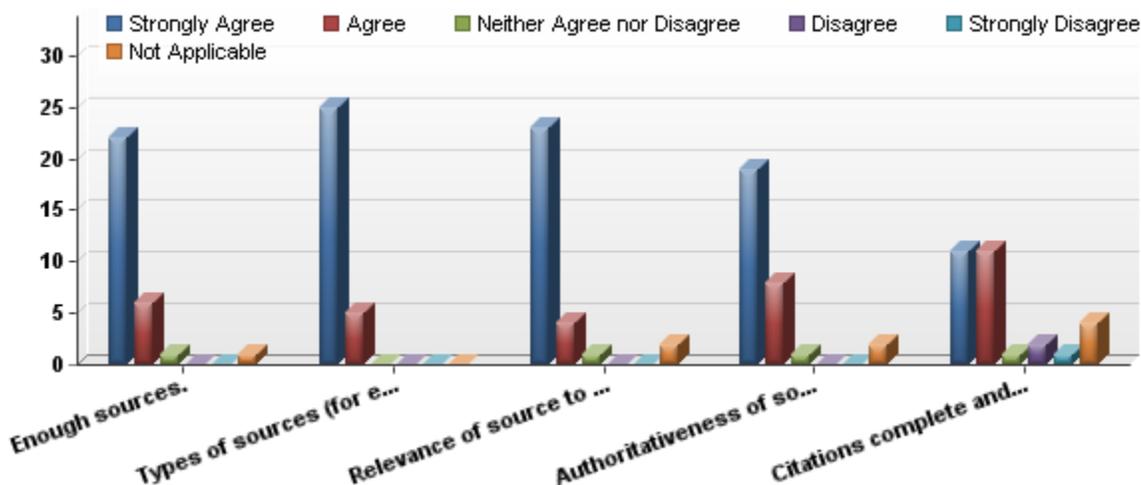
## Library Instruction Program 2010 Assessment Report

### Data Collected and Analyzed:

A survey was sent to 38 faculty who requested research skills, or Bibliographic Instruction (BI), sessions. 30 responses were returned for a 79% response rate. The survey asked faculty to evaluate students' achievement of five common learning objectives taught in the librarians' sessions, as reflected in the research papers students later turned in. Advantages of this method were that this survey was a direct measure based on students' actual research, and it was easy to administer. One drawback to this survey is that faculty had to generalize students' skills as a group. Another is that any particular sessions may have taught more or less of these five learning objectives. To account for this, N/A was an option, as well as an option to list other learning goals.

Five Likert-style questions asked whether students' research displayed satisfactory source types, relevance of sources, number of sources, level of source authority, and quality of citations. A sixth Yes/No question asked whether students' research was better because of the librarian-led session. Each question included opportunity for comments.

Results indicated a high level of agreement that student work demonstrated enough sources, the appropriate types of sources, relevant sources, and (somewhat less so) authoritative sources (see chart).



The quality of source citations in student research was the only criterion that showed less satisfaction, though still with a majority in the "strongly agree" or "agree" columns. Also, the "Not Applicable" column is higher here, as librarians don't always cover this. On future survey instruments, we should perhaps change the question about citations slightly to first ask faculty whether this was a goal of the session, and if so, whether it was successfully taught.

**Conclusions:**

The brief 50-minute sessions we normally have with students do not allow for more than a few learning objectives, so the citations objective is often not on the agenda. Though citation skills are not necessarily included in these one-hour sessions, they are important for students to master at some point. Some faculty wish librarians to teach them, while other faculty teach the skills themselves. Although librarians have expertise and resources to teach this aspect of information literacy, faculty have more time with students, correct their actual citations, and are in a position to teach to discipline standards.

Librarians help students with citing sources in many ways:

- teach at the reference desk and in student appointments
- provide style manuals
- maintain online guides on the library Web site
- offer EasyBib citation manager program
- teach ethical use of information as needed in one-hour sessions
- emerging online tutorials can include citation lessons for the different styles

Properly citing sources is a perennial difficulty for students for a variety of reasons. We have purchased the EasyBib citation manager program that will automate citations, and librarians should promote it at every opportunity to faculty and students in addition to collaborating with faculty to teach the styles and the importance of ethical use of information.

Finally, faculty clearly felt that students' research was better for having the librarian-led session with 26 "yes," four "don't know", and zero "no." The "Don't Know's" are probably from faculty who quite correctly reason that if they have not taught the course both with and without the library session, they can't say which is better. Perhaps this question should be revised to make it clearer.

This assessment indicates that librarian-taught research skills sessions are contributing to student success as judged by faculty. Although these skills could have been learned outside the library session, the majority of faculty members felt the library session contributed to student success.

**Actions taken to improve student learning (if any):**

Discussion among librarians revealed consensus that improving student citations is an ongoing process through a students' career, that faculty share this responsibility, and that the library is doing what it can to help with the goals. No changes at this time.

The suggestion was seconded to try to survey students themselves about their skills after they conduct research.

Submitted by Tim Held. Reviewed and approved by faculty 2010.