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# How Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Academic Librarians Can Inform Innovative Teaching

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# How Undergraduate Students' Perceptions of Academic Librarians Can Inform Innovative Teaching

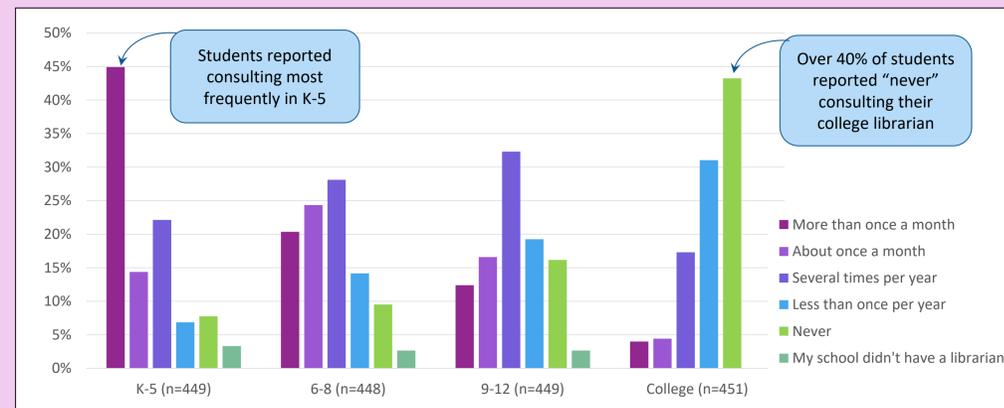
by Jody Fagan, Hillary Ostermiller, Elizabeth Price, and Lara Sapp

## Who Students Think Librarians Are

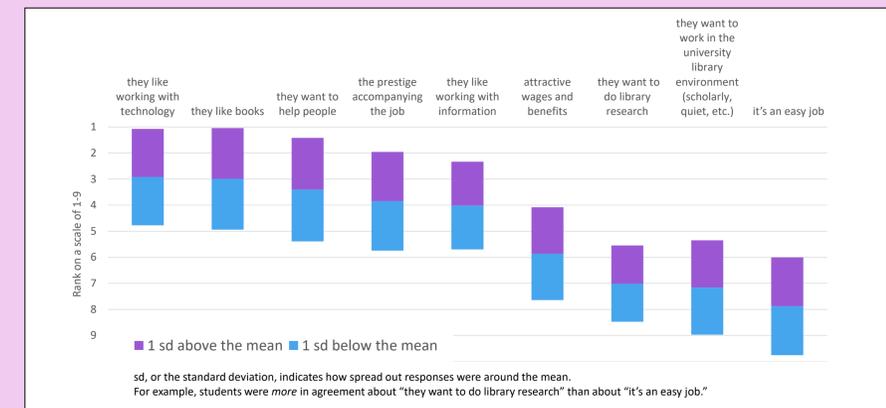
**Purpose:** To better understand how undergraduate students perceive librarians at James Madison University. Of the 19,549 full-time students enrolled Fall 2017, 513 responded. Survey consisted of 6 open-ended questions and 20 closed-ended questions

- The duties students think we perform most frequently:
  - Giving general directional help
  - Lending books, films, and equipment to users
  - Helping users to find books
- When asked if they could tell which workers in JMU Libraries are librarians, 47% said Yes, 30% said No, and 23% said Not Sure
- 65% said they never ask to speak to a librarian

## How Often Respondents Consulted Their School / College Librarian

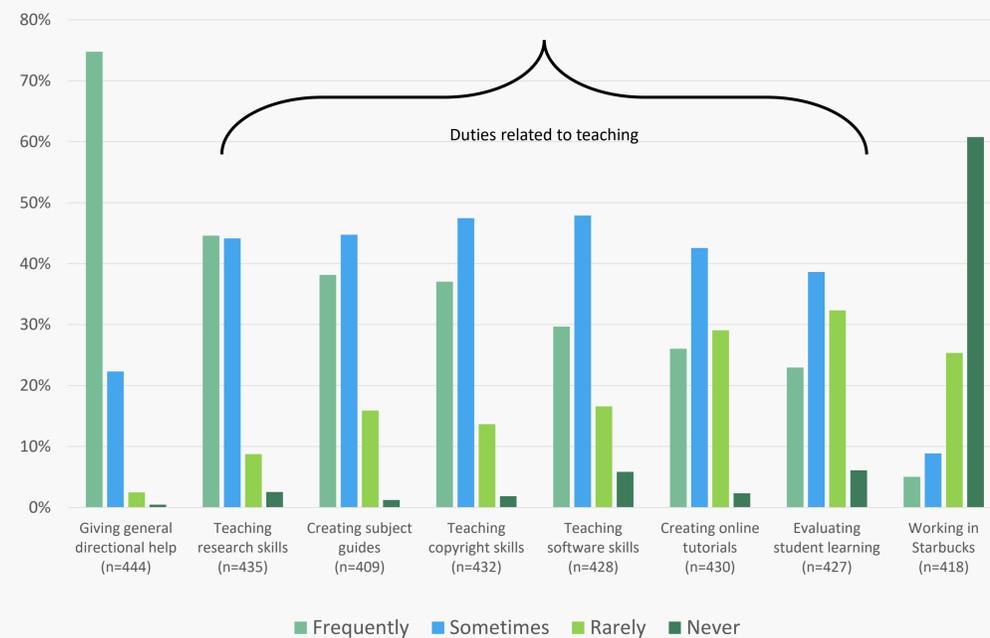


## Why Students Think We Became Librarians (n=440)

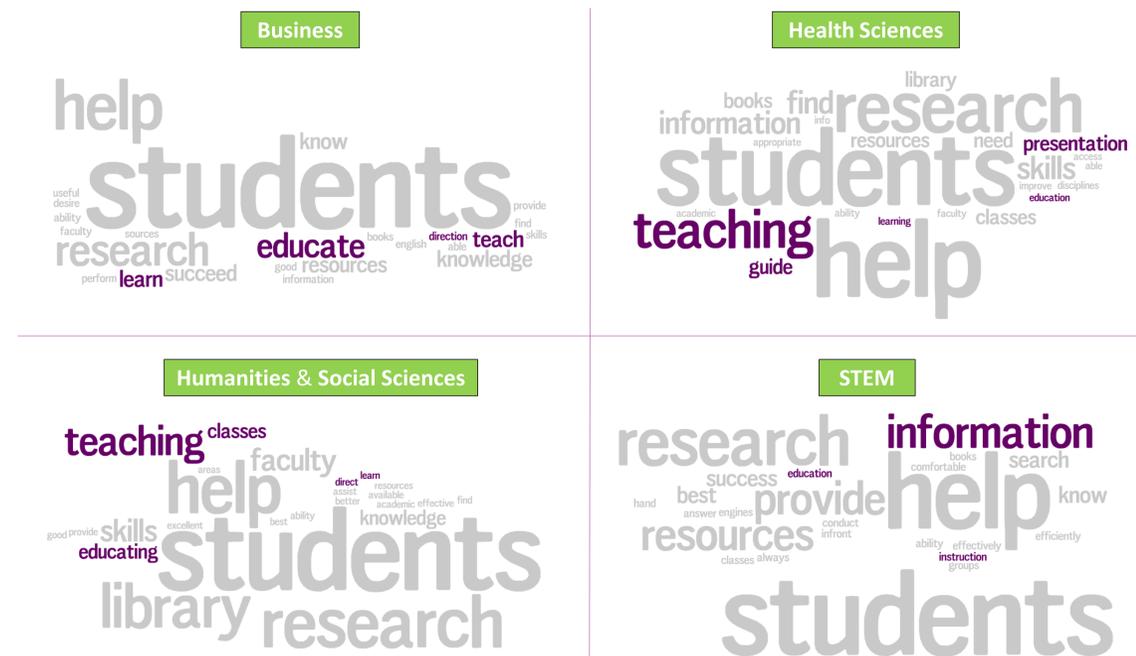


## How Often Students Think Academic Librarians Teach

- Survey included 26 statements beginning "How often do you think academic librarians perform the following duties?"
- The chart shows responses to the 6 statements most related to teaching.
- The duties thought to be most frequent (Giving general directional help) and least frequent (Working in Starbucks) are included for reference.
- Students do know that we teach, and quite a few realize we do other things involved in teaching.

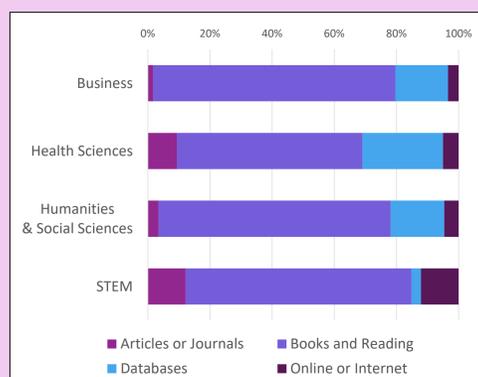


## Skills Students Perceive as Valuable to Them or to the University



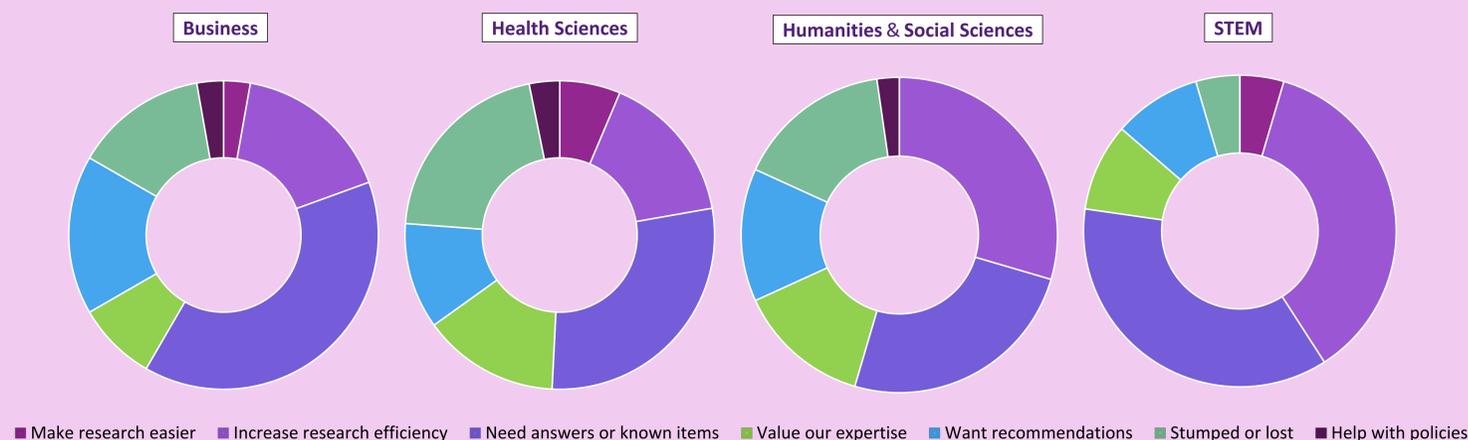
Word clouds represent frequently appearing terms from student responses to 2 qualitative questions. Purple words relate to teaching.

## Resource Types Mentioned



Terms students used to describe library resources, grouped by students' disciplines

## Why Students Ask Librarians for Help



## Other Things to Keep in Mind

Survey data suggests that students think:

- You only have a bachelor's degree.
- Your education focused on English, Literature, and History classes.
- You are an expert in citation styles and formatting.
- Books are central to your work, but you aren't a total luddite because technology plays a role in the modern library.
- The Dewey Decimal System is the *only* classification system.

**Tip:** Consider preparing an elevator speech to help students understand what you do and how you can assist them. See handout for examples.

About the survey

Analysis

Quick takeaways for teaching