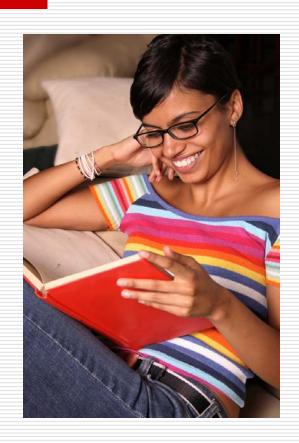# C.O.D Students' Experiences with Research

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Here's what I wanted to know...

- How are C.O.D. students actually going about the process of finding, evaluating, and using information sources for their assigned research projects?
- Do they ask for assistance and at what point?
- What are the students' experiences with research assistance?
- How do students put into practice the research skills that we teach them?
- How do they use the resources that we develop to assist them in their research?
- What suggestions do students have for improving the ways by which the Library helps them?

In their own words

- ☐ **Wanted to hear what they had to say with no interjection, no correction, no instruction.**

They said...

- ☐ I love the library, the Web site, the databases, the book collection, the staff.
- ☐ The "Citing Sources" pages rock!
- ☐ The Reference staff is very helpful (53% online survey; all 17 interviewed).
- ☐ "You guys are ridiculously helpful."
- ☐ I started my research project by using the Library's Web site (60% online survey).

They said more...

- I had some research experience in high school, but teachers weren't as demanding as they are here especially when it comes to citing.
- I found the library sessions/orientations helpful.
- I got some help at the Reference Desk and I was very satisfied (53% online survey).
- I have the most difficulty with deciding what to include in my paper or speech. I also find it difficult to find the right sources.

A few issues

- [ ] I can't find a computer when I need one.
- [ ] It's hard to find books upstairs (LC system, signage).
- [ ] Citing sources is difficult, but it's become easier with more practice.
- [ ] Finding articles has given me the most problems (where to look, which database to choose, how to search, finding the whole article).
- [ ] I have trouble finding good information on the Internet—I don't use it for papers.

More issues

- ☐ Sometimes it's hard to know "what the instructor wants."
- ☐ The differences between popular sources and scholarly sources is not clear.
- ☐ I'm not always sure how to determine if a source is credible.
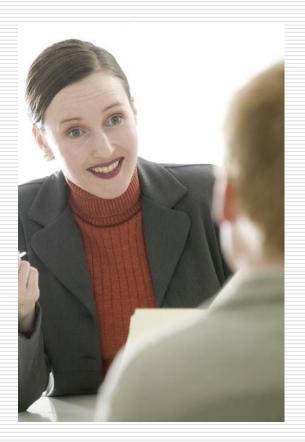
Tips for other students

- ☐ **Use the databases!**
- ☐ **Ask for help right away from the "gurus of all research."**
- ☐ **Don't procrastinate; manage your time carefully.**
- ☐ **Spend the time to become familiar with the Library's Web site.**
- ☐ **Double-check your sources! Make sure they're credible.**
- ☐ **Attend the library research sessions!**

Student interviews

- ☐ 17 interviews
- ☐ 9 open-ended questions
- ☐ 20 minutes on average
- ☐ $25 gift card to COD bookstore for everyone

Online survey

- ☐ 15 questions (Zoomerang)
- ☐ 19 responses
- ☐ Drawing for $50 gift card to the C.O.D. bookstore

Issues with project design

- ☐ Students were not as forthright in the interviews as they were in the online survey.
- ☐ Students who were willing to be interviewed were generally good students who liked the library.
- ☐ No one had any major problems, or would say so!
- ☐ The model that I developed for gathering information has value for future surveys, probably more than the information itself.
- ☐ Online survey response was very low. Possible reason: timing (sent out last two weeks of the term.)

So much more to find out

- ☐ **Recommend more online surveys**
- ☐ **Short, targeted, focused on particular areas, especially the Library's information literacy program and reference services**
- ☐ **"We want to know what YOU have to say about…"**